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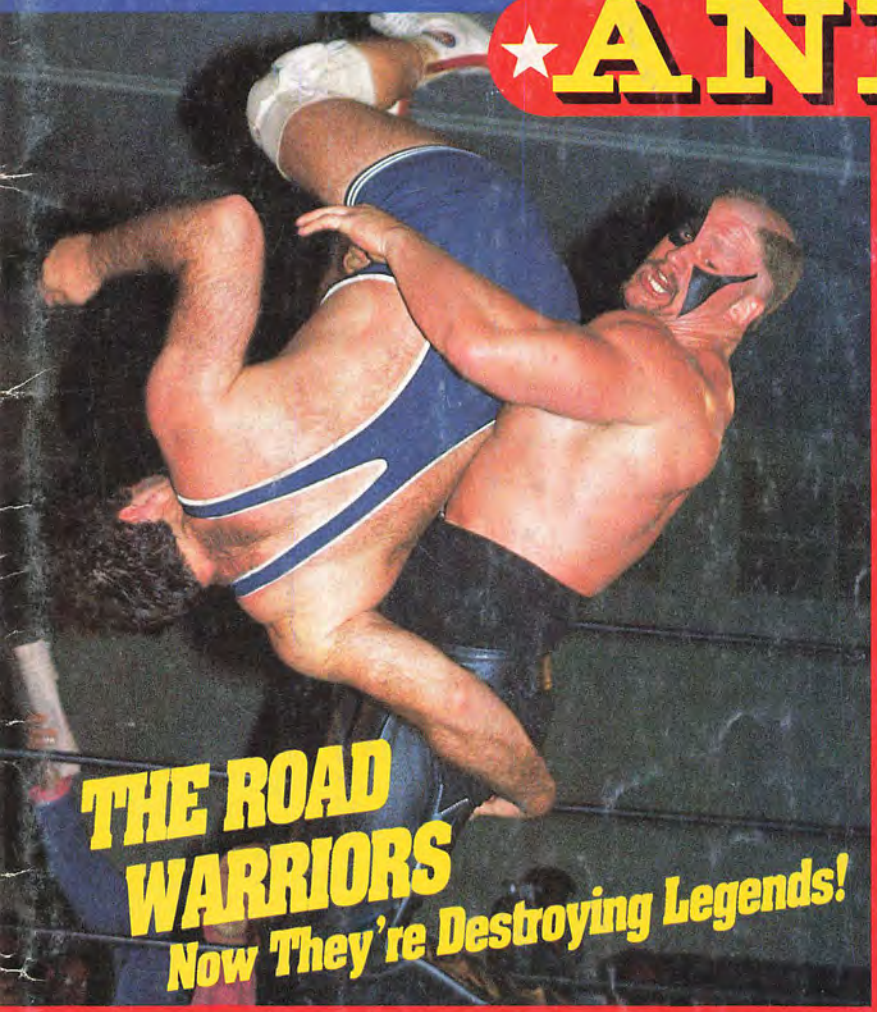

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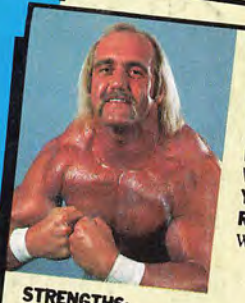


HULK HOGAN

HOME TOWN: Venice Beach, California
WEIGHT: 302
YEARS AS PRO: 6
RATING: No. 3 in Top 10; WWF champion

STRENGTHS:

- Enormous size and strength. At 6' 8", Hogan towers over most opponents. He is almost impossible to overpower, and most challengers soon wilt before his onslaught.
- Condition. Hogan continues to hone his body with an intense gym regimen.
- Charisma. His appearance in the ring sends fans into a frenzy of cheering, and Hogan draws strength from the wall-to-wall noise.

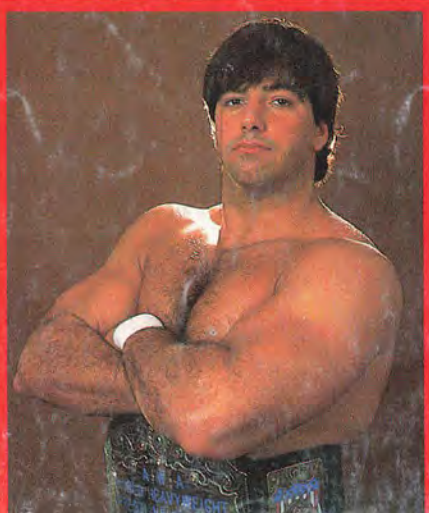
WEAKNESSES:

- Regarded by many experts as only an average wrestler. Hogan is always in danger of being outwrestled by someone with superb scientific knowledge.
- Hogan's out-of-wrestling commitments are sure to rob him of his psych in the ring. Recent matches have proven this.
- His teaming with a non-wrestler, Mr. T, has forever hurt his reputation as a serious athlete.

OTHER COMMENTS: Won the WWF title from Iron Sheik on January 23, 1984 . . . Has become the sport's most recognizable star . . . Sadly shows no interest in wrestling a strictly scientific challenger . . . The only wrestler to ever be on the cover of *Sports Illustrated*.

OUTLOOK FOR '85: The Hulkster's second year as champion should be more difficult than his first. With attendance down at many WWF shows, Hogan may be forced into a more reckless style to try to win back the loyalty of some fans who doubt his wrestling ability. Needs an untainted victory over another fan favorite to cement his legend.

Rick Martel Challenges Ric Flair:
"LET'S HAVE ONE WORLD CHAMPION"



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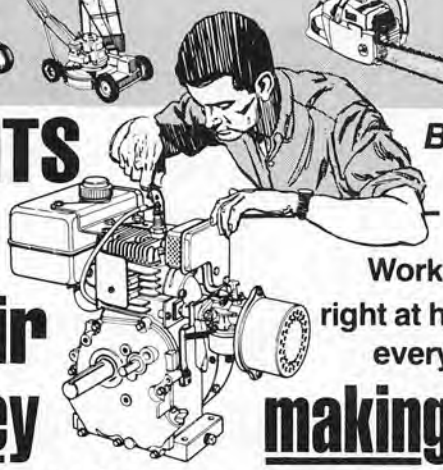

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PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED ANNUAL

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INTRODUCTION

Returning to wrestling following a lengthy layoff, Bob Backlund experienced a great deal of difficulty getting back into the rugged routine.

WELCOME TO THE Winter 1985 edition of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated Annual,* bringing you all the action-packed stories, excitement, and reports on top wrestling stars that you need to get you through these rugged back-to-school weeks.

Our issue starts off with a Press Conference with Bob Backlund (page 8) that originally appeared in our May 1985 edition. Backlund, a former WWF champion, continues to wrestle not only the top stars of the AWA, but that past life as champion that continues to hold him back from being the complete success he could be in the AWA. In this Press Conference, Backlund candidly discusses his association with the AWA and his past career in the WWF.

In our October 1985 issue, "King's Court" (page 20) by Editor-in-Chief Peter King reported some sad news: the death of Dan Shocket. Many of you undoubtedly followed Dan's opinions in the pages of *PWI* over the years, and whether you agreed or disagreed with him, you had to recognize that his was a brutally open and candid writing style. He had many enemies and many friends, as do most authors in the public eye. He was a mainstay of *PWI* for many years, and he will be sorely missed.

Above left: AWA champion Rick Martel would very much like to settle the problem of multiple world championships (page 22). Above right: The Tully Blanchard-Dusty Rhodes feud has reached an unprecedented level of violence (page 24).

Back in our October 1984 issue, the development of a combined NWA and AWA promotion was imminent. While "Pro Wrestling U.S.A." has unfortunately deteriorated to highlight just AWA stars, there is always the hope for an AWA-NWA title unification bout. "Rick Martel Challenges Ric Flair: 'Let's Have One World Champion!' " (page 22) shows that both the AWA and the NWA world champions would welcome just such a match.

Our February 1985 issue included an examination of the Dusty Rhodes-Tully Blanchard feud. At the time, we could hardly have imagined that the feud would grow to the gargantuan proportions that it is today. "Tully Blanchard Tells Dusty Rhodes: 'Get Lost Or Get Hurt!' " (page 24) highlights a threat by the Superbrat that Dusty obviously did not follow. And today, neither man has gotten lost—though both have been hurt quite a bit by this feud!

A cover story in our February 1984 issue took a look at "Greg 'The Hammer' Valentine: Wrestling's Savage Genius" (page 26). Since that story appeared, Valentine has had two managers (Capt. Lou Albano and Jimmy Hart), and enjoyed a reign as

(Continued on page 50)

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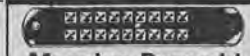

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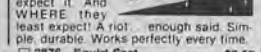

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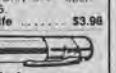

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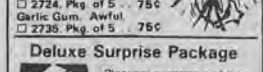

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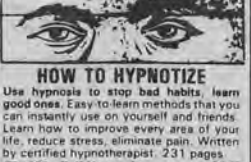

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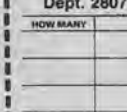

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Every issue, reporters from PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED will participate in an incisive press conference with a top wrestling star. The questions will be demanding. And the answers will reveal the innermost thoughts of the giants of the sport.

PRESS CONFERENCE

BOB BACKLUND

Bob Backlund is greeted by the fans before one of his return matches for *Pro Wrestling U.S.A.* Backlund says that WWF promoters tried to convince him that he was no longer popular with the fans.

For six years, from the beginning of 1978 to the end of 1983, the name of Bob Backlund was virtually synonymous with the WWF heavyweight title.

On February 20, 1978, Backlund defeated Superstar Graham in New York's Madison Square Garden for the WWF championship, defending the title successfully until December 26, 1983, in Madison Square Garden, when The Iron Sheik won the championship.

Backlund's loss to the Sheik was controversial for two reasons: First, Sheik had attacked Backlund several days earlier, injuring his shoulder and making him easy prey for the camel clutch. Second, Arnold Skaaland, Backlund's manager, threw in the towel when Backlund was being held in the camel clutch, reportedly afraid for Backlund's safety. Backlund, however, claims that he could have withstood the pain of the hold and gone on to complete a success-

(Continued on page 10)

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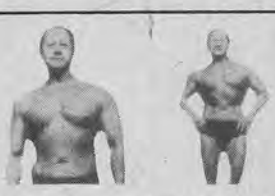

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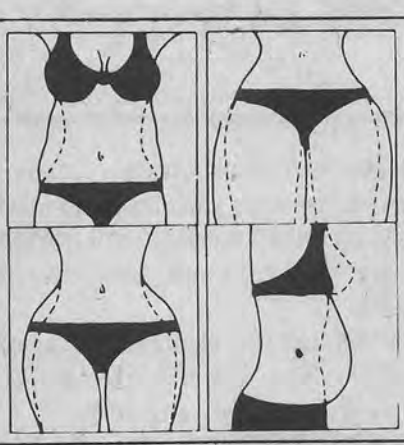

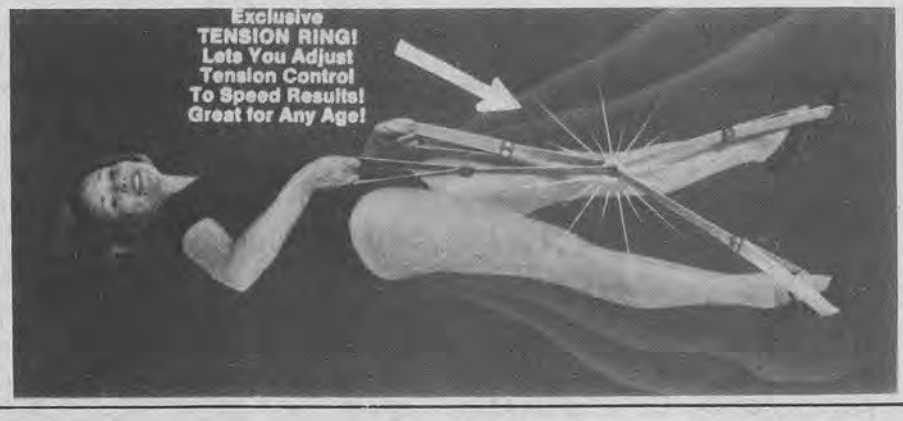

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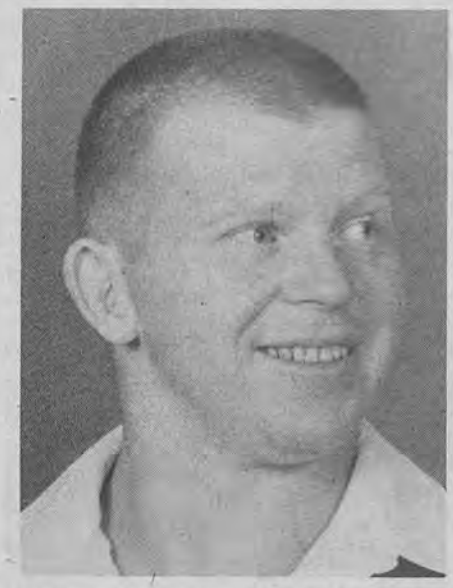
PRESS CONFERENCE

(Continued from page 8)



"They can take the belt away from me, but they can't take the title away. You have to be pinned or submit. If I got beat one-two-three, or if I gave up in the middle of the ring, I'd have said, 'Okay, I'm gonna go home.' "

ful title defense against the Sheik had Skaaland not intervened.

Recently, Backlund appeared in an interview on a brand-new wrestling television program, Pro Wrestling USA, *aired in the New York area. The program is unique because it features top stars from both the NWA and AWA. And while Backlund didn't wrestle on any of the program's first four installments, there are hopes that he will return to steady competition sometime soon.*

Pro Wrestling Illustrated *Senior Editor Bill Apter spoke with Backlund about that controversial title loss, the recent changes in his wrestling career, and his plans for the immediate future.*

BILL APTER: First of all, Bob, why did you leave the World Wrestling Federation?

BOB BACKLUND: **Because I was told that what I do is not worth doing.**

APTER: Could you elaborate on that?

BACKLUND: **Well, I was told two things. I was told the things I do aren't worth doing, and I was told my morals were too high. And I wasn't going to change my morals for anybody. I'm gonna keep my morals high. I like making a good living, but my morals and my standards are more important than making X-amount of dollars.**

APTER: Let's discuss the match in which you lost the WWF title to The Iron Sheik. You have recently stated that since you were not pinned and did not submit on your own that the title was unfairly taken from you.

BACKLUND: **Well, I felt that I didn't lose the championship, I felt that I lost the belt. They can take the belt away from me, but they can't take the title away. You have to be pinned or you have to submit, and that's been the rule in professional wrestling as long as I've been in it. Anybody that's ever lost the title since the WWF has started has lost by a pin or submission. If I got beat one-two-three, or if I gave up in the middle of the ring, I'd have said, 'Okay, I'm gonna go home, I'm gonna start training harder, I'm gonna try to figure out what mistake I made.' But that didn't happen. I still feel like I have the title. I just don't have the belt.**

APTER: Do you blame your manager of the time, Arnold Skaaland, for having the match stopped?

BACKLUND: **Well, he threw the towel in. He felt that the match should stop. But that's not the way I felt.**

APTER: Could you have continued?

BACKLUND: **Well, we'll never know that. I've always been able to get out of holds one way or another. That question will never be answered. But the one thing that kind of puzzles me is, you know, that could have been a towel from anybody. How did they know Arnold Skaaland threw the towel in? Around the ring in Madison Square Garden there's probably 15 people that have Bob Backlund towels.**

APTER: So you never saw Arnold Skaaland throw the towel in?

BACKLUND: **No, no. But I wasn't**

(Continued on page 12)

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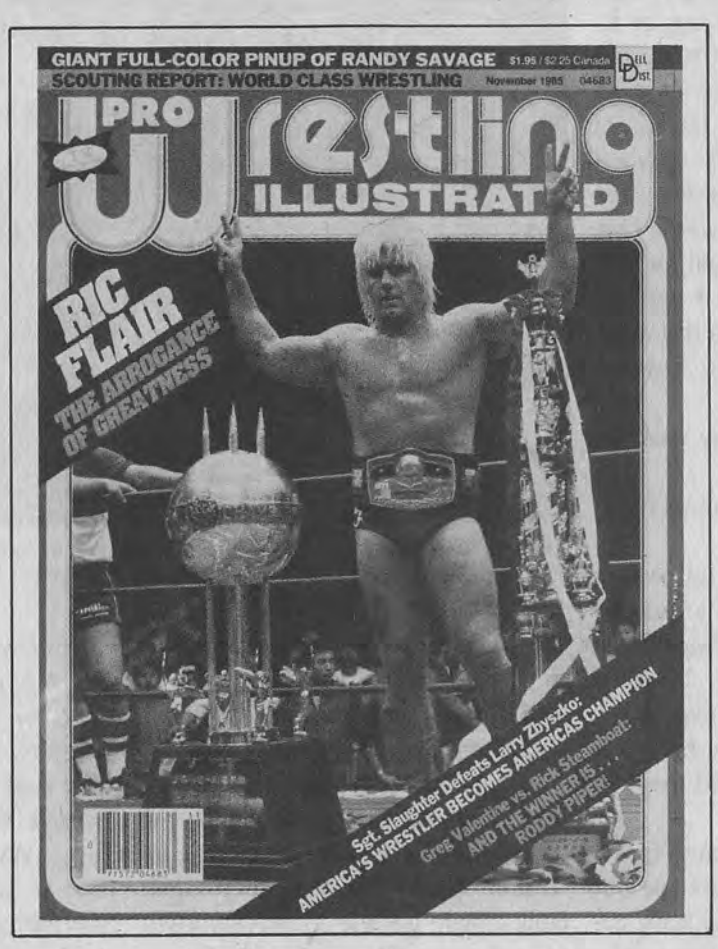
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(Continued from page 10)

really thinking about that. Out of the corner of my eye I could see a towel coming in. But geez, there's no way I wanted the match to stop. There's no way that I was gonna give up. I was gonna fight and try to get out of it.

APTER: That's history right now. The next step was that you wanted a rematch with The Iron Sheik, of course, and you were told . . . what?

BACKLUND: **I never wrestled The Iron Sheik, I never got to wrestle him. I had an injury, and they told me that I was injured too bad. But I wrestled the Saturday before and the day after.**

APTER: The day after you lost the title?

BACKLUND: **Yes. They only took me out of the one match.**

APTER: Who was your opponent after The Iron Sheik?

BACKLUND: **I'm not sure, I'd have to look in my book, but I had to wait till February 4 before I took some time off. And that was January 23 when they took me out of that match.**

APTER: Now why did they take you out of that match? What did they tell you?

BACKLUND: **They said because of my injury. And I said, 'Well, take me out of all the other matches and leave me in that one,' because that was the most important match of my career at the time.**

APTER: Did you feel you would have been 100 percent for that rematch had it taken place?

BACKLUND: **There was still some soreness in my arm, but not enough to warrant taking me out of the match.**

APTER: You were confident you could have beaten the Sheik?

BACKLUND: **I was confident that he was not gonna beat me, and I was gonna either get a chance to wrestle him again or beat him that night.**

APTER: At that time, Hulk Hogan came to the WWF and you started to team with him in various arenas. You've never wrestled much in tag team matches. What was your feeling toward this situation?

The Iron Sheik and "Ayatollah" Freddie Blassie celebrate their winning of the WWF title, as the fallen Bob Backlund is checked by the ringside physician and his manager, Arnold Skaaland, who minutes earlier had thrown in the towel.

BACKLUND: **I didn't really care to be in that situation. I was talked into it. And I didn't realize what they were gonna do by taking me out of the match. I don't know if this was planned ahead or not, by taking me out of the match and putting him in.**

APTER: What did you feel when Hulk Hogan got the shot as opposed to someone like Jimmy Snuka or Ivan Putski, two men who had been in the area for such a long time?

BACKLUND: **See, I wouldn't have wanted anybody—I wouldn't have wanted Snuka, I wouldn't have wanted Putski, I wouldn't have wanted my own brother to take my place in that match. But there's a lot of people that have been in the WWF for a lot of years, and it seems like the guy that comes in and is in the WWF for two weeks doesn't deserve a shot as much as a guy who's proved himself for the last, say, five years or three years or even 10 years.**

APTER: During the latter part of your six-year championship reign, you received a lot of criticism about wrestling only rulebreakers. How did that criticism affect you?

BACKLUND: **Well, once again even if it's me, if it's anybody that has the belt, he doesn't pick the people he wrestles; the federation picks the people. And I never said, 'Hey I wanna wrestle this guy, I never wrestle this guy.' [WWF promoter] Vince McMahon Sr. picked my opponents for me.**

APTER: Now a lot of the fans have said, for example, that when Jimmy Snuka had changed his ways, Bob Backlund never gave him a title shot. Did you want to wrestle him after you had those three spectacular matches with him at Madison Square Garden?

BACKLUND: **I would have wrestled anybody. It was not up to me. It was up to the WWF and it was up to Vince McMahon Sr. I never ever said I wanted to wrestle this man. They picked it for me. And if they had scheduled me with whoever it would be, Jimmy Snuka, Ivan Putski, The Iron Sheik . . . no matter who it was, that's who I wrestled.**

APTER: Let's discuss the three major titleholders right now, and your opinion on all three men. First of all

(Continued on page 58)

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Pro Wrestling Illustrated

T.V. SPORTS

Top 10 and Tag Team ratings are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and inherent skill of each wrestler or team. These ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board.

Rick Martel

TOP 10

1—RIC FLAIR
243, Minneapolis, MN

2—HULK HOGAN
302, Venice Beach, CA

3—RICK MARTEL
236, Quebec City, Quebec

4—MAGNUM T.A.
245, Chesapeake, VA

5—DUSTY RHODES
302, Austin, TX

6—TITO SANTANA
245, Mission, TX

7—KERRY VON ERICH
260, Denton, TX

8—SGT. SLAUGHTER
310, Parris Island, SC

9—PAUL ORNDORFF
253, Brandon, FL

10—NIKITA KOLOFF
275, Moscow, Russia

TAG TEAMS

1—THE ROAD WARRIORS
AWA World tag team champions
Combined weight: 567 pounds

2—BARRY WINDHAM & MIKE ROTUNDO
WWF World tag team champions
Combined weight: 475 pounds

3—RICK MORTON & ROBERT GIBSON
NWA World tag team champions
Combined weight: 453 pounds

4—TED DiBIASE & STEVE WILLIAMS
Mid-South tag team champions
Combined weight: 535 pounds

5—OLE & ARN ANDERSON
National tag team champions
Combined weight: 525 pounds

6—CHRIS ADAMS & GINO HERNANDEZ
World Class tag team champions
Combined weight: 454 pounds

7—RICK RUDE & JESSE BARR
U.S. tag team champions
Combined weight: 489 pounds

8—DENNIS CONDREY & BOBBY EATON
No. 1 contenders to National tag team title
Combined weight: 472 pounds

9—NIKOLAI VOLKOFF & IRON SHEIK
No. 1 contenders to WWF tag team title
Combined weight: 607 pounds

10—IVAN & NIKITA KOLOFF
No. 1 contenders to NWA tag team title
Combined weight: 524 pounds

NWA, AWA, and WWF ratings, in addition to the regional ratings from around the country, are based on the official current position of challengers to the top title in each category. (Certain titleholders receive an automatic spot in the ratings). Most Popular and Most Hated ratings are based on nationwide surveys of wrestling fans and mail that comes to our offices.

NWA

World Champion:
RIC FLAIR
243, Minneapolis, MN

1—MAGNUM T.A.
245, Chesapeake, VA

2—DUSTY RHODES
302, Austin, TX

3—BLACK BART
301, Houston, TX

4—GINO HERNANDEZ
224, Houston, TX

5—NIKITA KOLOFF
275, Moscow, Russia

6—TULLY BLANCHARD
235, San Antonio, TX

7—ICEMAN PARSONS
242, St. Louis, MO

8—WAHOO McDANIEL
260, Midland, TX

9—KERRY VON ERICH
260, Denton, TX

10—TERRY TAYLOR
225, Vero Beach, FL

AWA

World Champion:
RICK MARTEL
236, Quebec City, Quebec

1—SGT. SLAUGHTER
310, Parris Island, SC

2—MICHAEL HAYES
255, Marietta, GA

3—NICK BOCKWINKEL
245, Beverly Hills, CA

4—LARRY ZBYSZKO
248, Pittsburgh, PA

5—GREG GAGNE
220, Robbinsdale, MN

6—JERRY BLACKWELL
474, Stone Mountain, GA

7—TERRY GORDY
289, Chatanooga, TN

8—RAY STEVENS
243, San Francisco, CA

9—BARON VON RASCHKE
271, Germany

10—CURT HENNIG
235, Minneapolis, MN

WWF

World Champion:
HULK HOGAN
302, Venice Beach, CA

1—TITO SANTANA
245, Mission, TX

2—MAGNIFICENT MURACO
274, Sunset Beach, HA

3—GREG VALENTINE
243, Seattle, WA

4—RICK STEAMBOAT
238, Honolulu, HI

5—PAUL ORNDORFF
253, Brandon, FL

6—RODDY PIPER
231, Scotland

7—RANDY SAVAGE
245, Sarasota, FL

8—JUNKYARD DOG
260, New Orleans, LA

9—JOHN STUDD
364, Washington, DC

10—JIMMY SNUKA
250, Fiji Islands

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

1—MAGNUM T.A.
245, Chesapeake, VA

2—BLACK BART
301, Houston, TX

3—DUSTY RHODES
302, Austin, TX

4—NIKITA KOLOFF
275, Moscow, Russia

5—DICK SLATER
235, Tampa, FL

6—TULLY BLANCHARD
235, San Antonio, TX

7—MANNY FERNANDEZ
245, El Paso, TX

8—JIMMY VALIANT
251, New York, NY

9—KEVIN SULLIVAN
235, Boston, MA

10—SUPERSTAR GRAHAM
260, Paradise Valley, AZ

OFFICIAL WRESTLING RATINGS

WORLD CLASS
1—ICEMAN PARSONS
242, St. Louis, MO
2—GINO HERNANDEZ
224, Houston, TX
3—KERRY VON ERICH
260, Denton, TX
4—CHRIS ADAMS
230, Stratford, England
5—KEVIN VON ERICH
239, Denton, TX
6—ONE MAN GANG
468, Chicago, IL
7—KILLER BROOKS
235, Lancaster, TX
8—KABUKI
252, Singapore
9—SCOTT CASEY
242, San Antonio, TX
10—MIKE VON ERICH
220, Denton, TX

MID-SOUTH
1—THE NIGHTMARE
285, parts unknown
2—DICK MURDOCH
270, Waxahachie, TX
3—THE SNOWMAN
250, Memphis, TN
4—BILL WATTS
263, Oklahoma City, OK
5—HACKSAW DUGGAN
280, New York, NY
6—TED DiBIASE
247, Omaha, NB
7—STEVE WILLIAMS
295, Tulsa, OK
8—DUTCH MANTEL
242, Oil Trough, TX
9—JAKE ROBERTS
243, Baton Rouge, LA
10—BRICKHOUSE BROWN
225, Winter Haven, FL

FLORIDA
1—RICK RUDE
246, Robbinsdale, MN
2—BILLY JACK HAYNES
245, Portland, OR
3—WAHOO McDANIEL
260, Midland, TX
4—HECTOR GUERRERO
243, Mexico
5—JESSE BARR
243, Portland, OR
6—BUGSY McGRAW
268, New York, NY
7—SCOTT McGHEE
220, Shipley, England
8—MIKE GRAHAM
229, Tampa, FL
9—SWEET BROWN SUGAR
233, Lake Dalls, TX
10—RIP ROGERS
238, Atlanta, GA

MID-SOUTHERN
1—BOTA
270, Maori Islands
2—JERRY LAWLER
234, Memphis, TN
3—PHIL HICKERSON
238, Jackson, TN
4—JERRY OSKE
243, Hartford, CT
5—LORD JONATHAN BOYD
255, Aucklund, New Zealand
6—BRUISER BRODY
300, Albuquerque, NM
7—TOJO YAMAMOTO
230, Tokyo, Japan
8—RIP MORGAN
250, Auklund, New Zealand
9—BILLY TRAVIS
218, Houston, TX
10—BIG JOHN HARRIS
525, South Africa

MISSOURI
1—JERRY BLACKWELL
474, Stone Mountain, GA
2—HARLEY RACE
253, Kansas City, MO
3—KERRY VON ERICH
260, Denton, TX
4—BOB BACKLUND
242, Princeton, MN
5—MR. POGO
255, Tokyo, Japan
6—WAHOO McDANIEL
260, Midland, TX
7—ICEMAN PARSONS
232, St. Louis, MO
8—BUTCH REED
265, Kansas City, MO
9—TED DiBIASE
247, Omaha, NB
10—BULLDOG BOB BROWN
258, Winnipeg, Manitoba

NORTHWEST
1—MIKE MILLER
260, Memphis, TN
2—RICKY VAUGHAN
245, Tampa, FL
3—BOBBY JAGGERS
265, Dunlap, KS
4—PLAYBOY BUDDY ROSE
245, Hollywood, CA
5—MEGA MAHARISHI
260, Portland, OR
6—STEVE SIMPSON
220, Africa
7—JERRY GREY
233, Tampa, FL
8—BILLY TWO EAGLES
223, San Antonio, TX
9—STEVE PARDEE
232, San Mateo, CA
10—TIMOTHY FLOWERS
245, New York, NY

MOST POPULAR
1—HULK HOGAN
302, Venice Beach, CA
2—MAGNUM T.A.
245, Chesapeake, VA
3—KERRY VON ERICH
260, Denton, TX
4—DUSTY RHODES
302, Austin, TX
5—RICK MARTEL
236, Quebec City, Quebec
6—SGT. SLAUGHTER
310, Parris Island, SC
7—KEVIN VON ERICH
239, Denton, TX
8—JUNKYARD DOG
260, New Orleans, LA
9—WAHOO McDANIEL
260, Midland, TX
10—TITO SANTANA
245, Mission, TX

MOST HATED
1—CHRIS ADAMS
230, Stratford, England
2—TULLY BLANCHARD
235, San Antonio, TX
3—RODDY PIPER
231, Glasgow, Scotland
4—NIKITA KOLOFF
276, Moscow, Russia
5—GINO HERNANDEZ
224, Houston, TX
6—TED DiBIASE
247, Omaha, NB
7—GREG VALENTINE
243, Seattle, WA
8—RICK RUDE
246, Robbinsdale, MN
9—MAGNIFICENT MURACO
274, Sunset Beach, HI
10—KEVIN SULLIVAN
235, Boston, MA

For period ended July 16, 1985

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VICTORY SPORTS SERIES

Inside Wrestling

Be sure to fill in the gaps in your collection of INSIDE WRESTLING, "The magazine that rips the lid off pro wrestling." Get all the information you need to keep up on the pro wrestling scene. Don't be left out. Avoid sellouts—order today!

AUGUST 1984

July 1974/Stories include: Garea, Zbyszko, Heenan, Strongbow.
August 1974/Stories include: Sammartino, Sheik, Albano, Ladd.
September 1974/Stories include: Sammartino, Graham, Brooks, Bruiser.
November 1974/Stories include: Garvins, Mascaras, Sammartino, Graham.
June 1975/Stories include: Sammartino, Abdullah, LeDuc, Brisco.
August 1975/Stories include: Valentine, Garea, Rhodes, Sammartino.
September 1975/Stories include: Mascaras, Funk, Valiants, Gagne.
February 1976/Stories include: Andre, Strongbow, Lewin, Brazil.
March 1976/Stories include: Ladd, Funk, Sheik, Robinson.
April 1976/Stories include: Mascaras, Albano, Flair, Brisco.
June 1976/Stories include: Sammartino, Bockwinkel, Flair, Mascaras.
August 1976/Stories include: Funks, Mascaras, Sammartino, Putski.
September 1976/Stories include: Andre, Funk, Hansen, Mascaras.
October 1976/Stories include: Sammartino, Race, Johnson, Jones.
November 1976/Stories include: Mascaras, Wrestling II, Funk, Sammartino.
December 1976/Stories include: Stasiak, Rhodes, Bockwinkel, Orton.
January 1977/Stories include: Sammartino, Brisco, Funk, Gagne.
February 1977/Stories include: Andre, Funk, Sammartino, Gagne.
May 1977/Stories include: Sammartino, Putski, Sheik, Race.
August 1977/Stories include: Backlund, Graham, Mascaras, Lawler.
September 1977/Stories include: Sammartino, Andre, Mascaras, Brisco.
October 1977/Stories include: Andre, Rhodes, Backlund, Mulligan.
November 1977/Stories include: Graham, Rhodes, Mascaras, Gagne.
December 1977/Stories include: Andre, Mascaras, Johnson, Maivia.
March 1978/Stories include: Rhodes, Valentine, Backlund, Bockwinkel.
April 1978/Stories include: Backlund, Graham, Steamboat, Bruiser.
August 1978/Stories include: Backlund, Rhodes, Andre, Hansen.
October 1978/Stories include: Sammartino, Andre, Rhodes, McDaniel.
November 1978/Stories include: Rhodes, Backlund, Flair, Steamboat.
December 1978/Stories include: Sammartino, Rhodes, Wrestling II, Bravo.
January 1979/Stories include: Sammartino, Mulligan, Rhodes, Backlund.
February 1979/Stories include: Race, Sammartino, Steamboat, Ladd.
April 1979/Stories include: Andre, Flair, Backlund, Jones.
May 1979/Stories include: Steamboat, Rhodes, Backlund, Heenan.
June 1979/Stories include: Rhodes, Superstar, Bockwinkel, Backlund.
July 1979/Stories include: Rhodes, Ladd, Valiant, Brower.
August 1979/Stories include: Flair, Garvin, Race, Sammartino.
September 1979/Stories include: Steamboat, Mascaras, Strongbow, Garvin.

AUGUST 1985

October 1979/Stories include: Rich, Rhodes, Backlund, Putski.
November 1979/Stories include: Snuka, Heenan, Race, Backlund.
February 1980/Stories include: Patera, Snuka, Santana, Albano.
March 1980/Stories include: Flair, Rich, Funk, Duncum.
April 1980/Stories include: Hogan, Rich, Backlund, Mascaras.
May 1980/Stories include: Sammartino, Murdoch, Mulligan, Bockwinkel.
June 1980/Stories include: Putski, Andre, Hernandez, Keirn.
July 1980/Stories include: Rhodes, Von Erich, Superstar, Blassie.
August 1980/Stories include: Sammartino, Wrestling II, Baker, Koloff.
September 1980/Stories include: Mascaras, Rhodes, Ladd, Iron Sheik.
November 1980/Stories include: Rhodes, Putski, Bockwinkel, Koloff.
January 1981/Stories include: Race, Snuka, Morales, Slater.
February 1981/Stories include: Backlund, DiBiase, Bravo, Anderson.
April 1981/Stories include: Albano, Sammartino Jr., Race, McGraw.
May 1981/Stories include: Iron Sheik, Von Erich, Backlund, Santana.
June 1981/Stories include: Rhodes, Hansen, Piper, Gagne.
September 1981/Stories include: Patera, Koloff, Khan, Junkyard Dog.
November 1981/Stories include: Rhodes, Santana, Andre, Snuka.
January 1982/Stories include: Flair, Hogan, Race, Humperdink.
February 1982/Stories include: Valentine, Flair, Steamboat, Rhodes.
March 1982/Stories include: Rich, Backlund, Idol, Spoiler.
April 1982/Stories include: Rhodes, Andre, Von Erich, Piper.
May 1982/Stories include: Backlund, Rhodes, Hogan, Von Erich.
June 1982/Stories include: Valentine, Von Erich, Slaughter, Morales.
July 1982/Stories include: Hogan, Rhodes, Steamboat, Adonis.
August 1982/Stories include: Andre, Bockwinkel, Steamboat, Backlund.
September 1982/Stories include: Atlas, Piper, Lawler, Brody.
October 1982/Stories include: Rich, Andre, Piper, Dillon.
November 1982/Stories include: Flair, Snuka, Von Erich, Slaughter.
December 1982/Stories include: Mulligan, Rich, Lawler, Grand Wizard.
February 1983/Stories include: Rhodes, Hogan, DiBiase, Race.
March 1983/Stories include: Junkyard Dog, Graham, Johnson, Funk.
April 1983/Stories include: Snuka, Patera, Kabuki, Rich.
May 1983/Stories include: Rich, Snuka, Sullivan, Steamboat.
June 1983/Stories include: Studd, Garvin, Rogers, Orton.
July 1983/Stories include: Hogan, Freebirds, Rhodes, Youngblood.
August 1983/Stories include: Junkyard Dog, Garvin, Sullivan, Lawler.
September 1983/Stories include: Zbyszko, Piper, Andre, Hayes.
October 1983/Stories include: Wrestling II, Backlund, Junkyard Dog, Rhodes.
November 1983/Stories include: Hogan, Reed, Von Erich, Dillon.
December 1983/Stories include: Von Erich, Samoans, Valiant, Road Warriors.
January 1984/Stories include: Von Erich, Rich, Superstar, Piper.
February 1984/Stories include: Abdullah, Sawyers, Valiant, Von Erich.
March 1984/Stories include: Junkyard Dog, Rich, Rhodes, Garvin.
April 1984/Stories include: Flair, Steamboat, Superstar, Windham.
May 1984/Stories include: Iron Sheik, Steamboat, Rotundo, Von Erich.
June 1984/Stories include: Flair, Slaughter, Cornette, DiBiase.
July 1984/Stories include: Valiant, Flair, Martel, Wrestling II.
August 1984/Stories include: Junkyard Dog, Magnum T.A., Idol, Spoiler.
September 1984/Stories include: Martel, Brody, Von Erich, Iron Sheik.
October 1984/Stories include: Billy Jack, Road Warriors, Steamboat, Piper.
November 1984/Stories include: Rhodes, Rich, Hernandez, Warriors.
December 1984/Stories include: Hogan, Warriors, Sullivan, Magnum T.A.
January 1985/Stories include: Magnum T.A., Rhodes, Atlas, Von Erich.
February 1985/Stories include: Rich, Adams, Valiant, Flair.
March 1985/Stories include: Backlund, Billy Jack, Koloffs, Von Erichs.
April 1985/Stories include: Warriors, Albano & Hogan, Steamboat, Gordy.
May 1985/Stories include: Slaughter, Garvin, Albano, Koloffs.
June 1985/Stories include: Warriors, Slaughter, Von Erichs, Studd & Patera.
July 1985/Stories include: Hogan, Von Erich, Nikita, Warriors.
August 1985/Stories include: Wrestlemania, Zbyszko vs. The Tonga Kid.
September 1985/Stories include: Piper, Flair, Fantastics, Magnum T.A.

INSIDE WRESTLING

☐ JULY 74	☐ OCT 77	☐ APR 80	☐ AUG 82	☐ JUNE 84
☐ AUG 74	☐ NOV 77	☐ MAY 80	☐ SEPT 82	☐ JULY 84
☐ SEPT 74	☐ DEC 77	☐ JUNE 80	☐ OCT 82	☐ AUG 84
☐ NOV 74	☐ FEB 78	☐ JULY 80	☐ NOV 82	☐ SEPT 84
☐ JUNE 75	☐ APR 78	☐ AUG 80	☐ DEC 82	☐ OCT 84
☐ AUG 75	☐ AUG 78	☐ SEPT 80	☐ FEB 83	☐ NOV 84
☐ SEPT 75	☐ OCT 78	☐ NOV 80	☐ MAR 83	☐ DEC 84
☐ FEB 76	☐ NOV 78	☐ JAN 81	☐ APR 83	☐ JAN 85
☐ MAR 76	☐ DEC 78	☐ FEB 81	☐ MAY 83	☐ FEB 85
☐ APR 76	☐ JAN 79	☐ APR 81	☐ JUNE 83	☐ MAR 85
☐ JUNE 76	☐ FEB 79	☐ MAY 81	☐ JULY 83	☐ APR 85
☐ AUG 76	☐ APR 79	☐ JUNE 81	☐ AUG 83	☐ MAY 85
☐ SEPT 76	☐ MAY 79	☐ SEPT 81	☐ SEPT 83	☐ JUNE 85
☐ OCT 76	☐ JUNE 79	☐ NOV 81	☐ OCT 83	☐ JULY 85
☐ NOV 76	☐ JULY 79	☐ JAN 82	☐ NOV 83	☐ AUG 85
☐ DEC 76	☐ AUG 79	☐ FEB 82	☐ DEC 83	☐ SEPT 85
☐ JAN 77	☐ SEPT 79	☐ MAR 82	☐ JAN 84	
☐ FEB 77	☐ OCT 79	☐ APR 82	☐ FEB 84	
☐ MAY 77	☐ NOV 79	☐ MAY 82	☐ MAR 84	
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☐ SEPT 77	☐ MAR 80	☐ JULY 82	☐ MAY 84	

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THE Wrestler

Don't miss a single issue of the magazine that has thrilled wrestling fans for two generations, THE WRESTLER. Complete your collection of the most respected wrestling publication in the world today. Supplies are limited. Don't delay—order today!

February 1975/Stories include: Andre, Strongbow, Brisco, Sheik,

June 1975/Stories include: Andre, Muraco, Funk, Lawler.

July 1975/Stories include: Valentine, Sammartino, Race, Rhodes.

August 1975/Stories include: Sammartino, Patterson, Stasiak, Rivera.

December 1975/Stories include: Mascaras, Rhodes, McDaniel, Blackjacks.

January 1976/Stories include: Sammartino, Putski, Wrestling II, Rhodes.

February 1976/Stories include: Andre, Sammartino, Rhodes, Valentine.

June 1976/Stories include: Mascaras, Putski, Patera, Bruiser.

July 1976/Stories include: Andre, Wrestling II, Inoki, Von Erich.

November 1976/Stories include: Sammartino, Andre, Valentine, Mosca.

December 1976/Stories include: Von Erich, Mulligan, Brody, Funk.

January 1977/Stories include: Brody, Andre, Wrestling II, Mascaras.

February 1977/Stories include: Sammartino, Jones, Funk, Von Raschke.

April 1977/Stories include: Sammartino, Funk, Flair, Bockwinkel.

May 1977/Stories include: Mascaras, Valiants, Andersons, Sammartino.

June 1977/Stories include: Patera, Putski, Hernandez, McDaniel.

July 1977/Stories include: Backlund, Rhodes, Rocca, Mascaras.

October 1977/Stories include: Rhodes, Sammartino, Flair, Snuka.

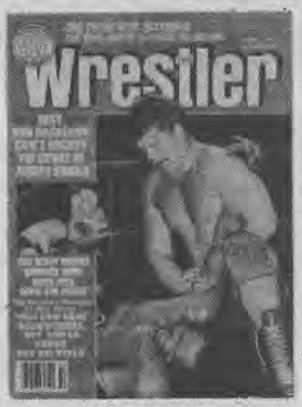
November 1977/Stories include: Sammartino, Slater, Mascaras, Snuka.

September 1978/Stories include: Rhodes, Grahams, Andre, Mascaras.

October 1978/Stories include: Sammartino, Backlund, McDaniel, Race.

November 1978/Stories include: Flair, Andre, Ladd, Graham.

December 1978/Stories include: Brisco, Mulligan, Andre, Blanchard.



OCTOBER 1982

February 1979/Stories include: Ladd, Flair, Idol, Heenan.

May 1979/Stories include: Steamboat, Brody, Valiants, Race.

July 1979/Stories include: Wrestling II, Backlund, Sammartino, Andre.

August 1979/Stories include: Bockwinkel, Patera, Stevens, Superstar.

September 1979/Stories include: Steamboat, Graham, Piper, Mascaras.

October 1979/Stories include: Flair, Valentine, Santana, Muraco.

December 1979/Stories include: Andre, Graham, Rhodes, Mascaras.

January 1980/Stories include: Race, Backlund, Snuka, Brisco.

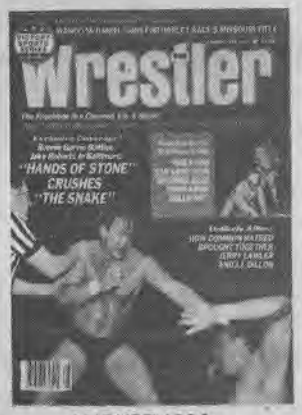
February 1980/Stories include: Andre, Flair, DiBiase, Superstar.

March 1980/Stories include: Sammartino, Murdoch, Mulligan, Andre.

April 1980/Stories include: Rhodes, DiBiase, Youngblood, Wrestling II.

May 1980/Stories include: Andre, Mascaras, Bockwinkel, Patera.

June 1980/Stories include: Backlund, Abdullah, Brisco, Flair.



AUGUST 1984

August 1980/Stories include: Valentine, Zbyszko, Von Erich, Albano.

September 1980/Stories include: Ladd, Patera, Steamboat, Gagne.

October 1980/Stories include: Patera, Rhodes, Wrestling II, Morales.

November 1980/Stories include: Rich, Hogan, Snuka, Super Destroyers.

January 1981/Stories include: Valentine, Rhodes, Patera, Von Erich.

February 1981/Stories include: Zbyszko, Patera, Iron Sheik, Wrestling II.

March 1981/Stories include: Rich, Samoans, Blassie, Wrestling II.

May 1981/Stories include: Backlund, Rhodes, DiBiase, Moondogs.

June 1981/Stories include: Sammartino, Piper, Rich, Martel.

July 1981/Stories include: Backlund, Rhodes, Flair, Atlas.

August 1981/Stories include: DiBiase, Slaughter, Martel, Idol.

October 1981/Stories include: Funks, Rhodes, Race, Sullivan.

December 1981/Stories include: Rhodes, Steele, Race, Hogan.

January 1982/Stories include: Rich, Steamboat, Sullivan, Sammartino.

March 1982/Stories include: Slaughter, Albano, Flair, Race.

April 1982/Stories include: Brisco, Armstrongs, Valentine, Santana.

May 1982/Stories include: Backlund, Von Erich, Graham, Rich.

June 1982/Stories include: Steamboat, Reed, Albano, Piper.

July 1982/Stories include: Rich, Sawyer, Flair, Steamboat.

August 1982/Stories include: Bockwinkel, Steamboat, Mulligans, Piper.

September 1982/Stories include: Rhodes, Hogan, Armstrong, Blair.

October 1982/Stories include: Snuka, Rhodes, Santana, Piper.

November 1982/Stories include: Flair, Snuka, Piper, Blair.

December 1982/Stories include: Snuka, Rich, Kamala, Junkyard Dog.

January 1983/Stories include: Putski, Muraco, Windham, Bockwinkel.

February 1983/Stories include: Bockwinkel, Backlund, Rich, Kamala.

March 1983/Stories include: Piper, Reed, Valiant, Roberts.

April 1983/Stories include: Rhodes, Tiger Mask, Sammartino, Bundy.

May 1983/Stories include: Samoans, Von Erich, Rhodes, Orndorff.

June 1983/Stories include: Windham, Martel, Brody, Andre.

July 1983/Stories include: Flair, Adonis, Sullivan, Zbyszko.

August 1983/Stories include: Valentine, Blanchard, Windham, Street.

September 1983/Stories include: Hogan, Ellering, Von Erich, Briscos.

October 1983/Stories include: Race, Sawyer, Briscos, Bass.

November 1983/Stories include: Rhodes, Santana, Von Erichs, Kabuki.

December 1983/Stories include: Mascaras, Superstar, Von Erich, Zbyszko.

January 1984/Stories include: Valentine, Hogan, Von Erich, Road Warriors.

March 1984/Stories include: Santana, Hogan, Von Erich, Sawyers.

April 1984/Stories include: Hogan, Ellering, Von Erich, Rhodes.

May 1984/Stories include: Windham, Brody, Road Warriors, Junkyard Dog.

June 1984/Stories include: Von Erich, Billy Jack, Flair, Armstrong.

July 1984/Stories include: Rich, Billy Jack, Valiant, Von Erich.

August 1984/Stories include: Garvin, Sullivan, Freebirds, Street.

September 1984/Stories include: Von Erich, Piper, Steamboat, Billy Jack.

October 1984/Stories include: Flair, Rhodes, Magnum T.A., Bundy.

November 1984/Stories include: Billy Jack, Von Erich, Piper, Brody.

December 1984/Stories include: Martel, Santana, Von Erich, Steamboat.

January 1985/Stories include: Von Erich, Warriors, Albano, Koloffs.

February 1985/Stories include: Warriors, Santana, Billy Jack, Nikita Koloff.

March 1985/Stories include: Slaughter, Warriors, Martel, Rude.

April 1985/Stories include: Warriors, Von Erich-Adams, Flair, Tonga & Snuka.

May 1985/Stories include: Warriors, Backlund, Santana, Rich.

June 1985/Stories include: Rhodes, Windham, Rich, Hogan.

July 1985/Stories include: Junkyard Dog, Reed, Martel, Sunshine.

August 1985/BONUS 4-PG. COLOR SECTION! Plus: Warriors, Magnum T.A., Sheik & Volkoff, McGraw.

September 1985/Stories include: Hogan, Von Erich, Savage, R&R Express.

THE WRESTLER

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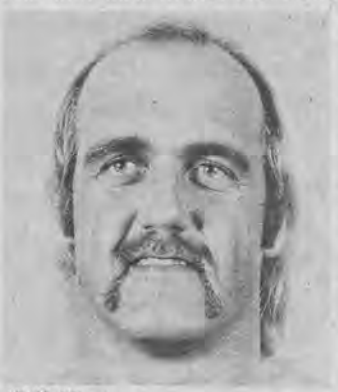
RATINGS ANALYSIS

This column will tell fans how we go about rating more than 150 wrestlers in 14 different categories. It is a behind-the-scenes look at the most important—and respected—ratings system in the sport. This column is vital reading for all wrestling fans.

The world title controversy—settled. In the Fall 1985 edition of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated Annual,* "Ratings Analysis" solicited reader mail regarding the question: "Should the WWF title be regarded as a world championship?" That "Ratings Analysis" examined arguments for and against recognizing Hulk Hogan as a world champion, in the same way that Ric Flair and Rick Martel are world champions.



Hulk Hogan

Mail flooded our office. And after hours upon hours of reading your letters regarding this championship controversy, a decision has been made:

The WWF title will now be regarded as a world championship, equal in significance to the NWA and AWA World championships.

We anticipate a lot of reader reaction to come from this decision. Indeed, the editorial staff of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated Annual* continues to be split about whether this move should have been made, but we all agree on one thing: This was a democratic decision. Majority rules. And the majority of your mail (about 60 percent) came out in favor of recognizing Hogan as a world champion.

So, in the ratings, in "Ratings Analysis," and in the stories that you will read in *Pro Wrestling Illustrated Annual* and its sister publications, the WWF heavyweight title and the WWF tag team title will be recognized as world championships.

We are as interested in your reactions to this decision now as we were interested in your answers to the question made months ago. If you would like to voice your opinion on the WWF world championship controversy, we would like to hear from you. If reaction warrants, a future "Ratings Analysis" will be devoted entirely to your letters on the matter.

Send your comments to: "WWF Ratings Analysis" c/o *Pro Wrestling Illustrated Annual;* Box 48; Rockville Centre; New York 11571.

Stop me if you've heard this one before: The following letter came from Rich Wilson of Philadelphia:

"I love your ratings system and 'Ratings Analysis,' but how come the 'Ratings Analysis' is the same in *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* as it is in *The Wrestler* as it is in *Sports Review Wrestling*? Why don't you do a different analysis for each magazine?"

Actually, Rich, we try to make each "Ratings Analysis" as different as possible, though you're right: There *are* similarities within each month's series of magazines. This is mainly due to the fact that some issues are very important and bear repeating from magazine to magazine, such as the WWF World title controversy above—and the point you bring up in your letter! Since many fans may only read one of the above-mentioned magazines, we want to make sure that everyone is filled in on the important developments. But you'll note that when we feature an extra category in our ratings, such as Polynesian Pacific ratings, the rankings change from issue to issue, depending on the deadline of when that particular issue went to press.

Koloff, Khrushchev, & Koloff

Regarding the Russians: Time to clear up what has become a slight bit of confusion regarding our tag team ratings.

"Ratings Analysis" has received a few letters regarding the fact that former NWA World tag team champions Ivan and Nikita Koloff are in the ratings while the Von Erichs are not. "If your policy is not to rank three-man tag teams, that's understandable," Alice Gorry of Dallas, Texas, wrote, "but as far as I know, the Koloffs are in a three-man team with Krusher Khrushchev. What's the difference between them and the Von Erichs?"

Alice brings forth a valid question. The answer is that although the Koloffs and Khrushchev lay claim to the World six-man title, they also held—and currently are challenging for—the NWA tag team title in combinations of two. While technically there are three two-man combinations of the Koloffs and Khrushchev, we choose to rate what we feel is the best of those combinations: Ivan and Nikita Koloff.

While the Von Erichs do break up into two-man teams quite frequently, they are spending the majority of their time trying to regain the World Class six-man title from Mark Lewin, Killer Brooks, and One Man Gang.

Look for a future installment of "Ratings Analysis" to provide a top 10 listing of the best three-member tag teams in the sport.

The address for mail: We always like to read your comments and questions about our ratings system. Send them to: "Ratings Analysis" c/o *Pro Wrestling Illustrated Annual;* Box 48; Rockville Centre; New York 11571. □

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KING'S COURT

By Peter King

LET ME TELL you about Dan Shocket.

Regular readers of our magazines know Dan Shocket as the "bad-guy columnist." In fact, Dan's columns have often defended "rulebreakers" while attacking "fan favorites." Through the years, Dan's columns have informed you, interested you, angered you, and pleased you.

Dan Shocket worked for our wrestling magazines for more than 10 years. For the first five years, he virtually carried this company on his back: He was not only our chief reporter, but our number one writer as well. For the last five years, Dan has primarily been a columnist, where his unique viewpoints and style have made him one of the most-read wrestling writers in the world.

While many of his viewpoints angered the mainstream wrestling fan, I know Dan always wrote what he believed to be the truth. Some fans cannot understand that when a wrestler breaks the rules to be successful, there may be underlying reasons for it. But Dan always believed that there was more to wrestlers than their being some sort of cartoon characters who only exist inside a wrestling ring. Dan knew that these men have families, and that these families must be fed. Dan never believed in penalizing someone simply because he was disliked by the majority of the wrestling fans. "Fans used to boo Mickey Mantle, too," Dan always said. If a wrestler was hard-working and had talent, Dan respected him.

DAN SHOCKET

At the same time, Dan also sneered at men who were proclaimed "heroes." He knew that they, too, were human beings. It made Dan angry when "mindless fans," as he called them, thought a wrestler was a hero simply because he was cheered in the ring.

In a sentence, Dan looked beyond the hype and into the souls. And he saw that all of these men were human beings, and not one of them was any better than another.

This confused some fans who believed that wrestling was just black and white—good guy vs. bad guy. Some fans got angry. But all were forced to think.

On May 4, Dan Shocket died after a two-year battle against cancer. He was only 35 years old. The week after he died, I opened a few letters that were addressed to Dan's "Off The Top Rope" column. I was shocked.

Some of the letters were critical of Dan, of course, but many many more praised him. I couldn't believe the number of fans Dan had earned. One letter writer even wanted to start a fan club for Dan. But most echoed the sentiments of the letter writer who simply begged Dan to keep "telling the truth."

For the last two years, despite battling constant pain, Dan never changed. He continued writing his columns, he continued being here when we needed him, and he continued being the wittiest man I've ever known; in short, he continued being Dan Shocket. And he kept telling us everything would be all right, because he didn't want us to worry about him.

Wrestling is a sport where, too often, undeserving men are deemed "heroes" by promoters simply because they can sell tickets. Dan criticized these men, sometimes with anger, sometimes with sarcasm. I think his message was clear: Being a successful athlete doesn't automatically make a man a hero. It takes more.

Heroism and bravery are two of the greatest virtues of mankind. They can't be bestowed, they must be earned. In the end, Dan Shocket proved that he was braver than any wrestler alive, and more of a hero than all of them put together. □

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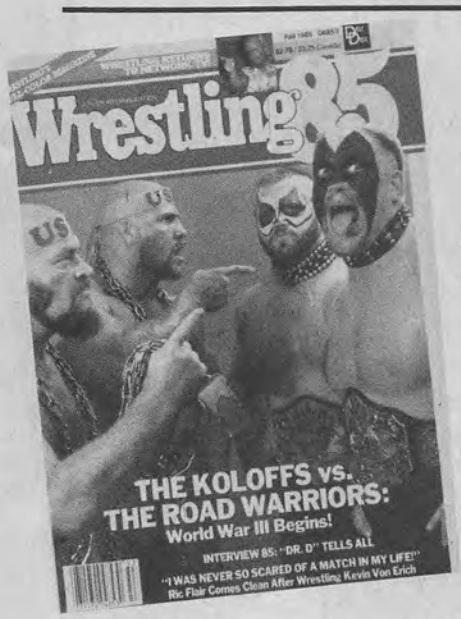
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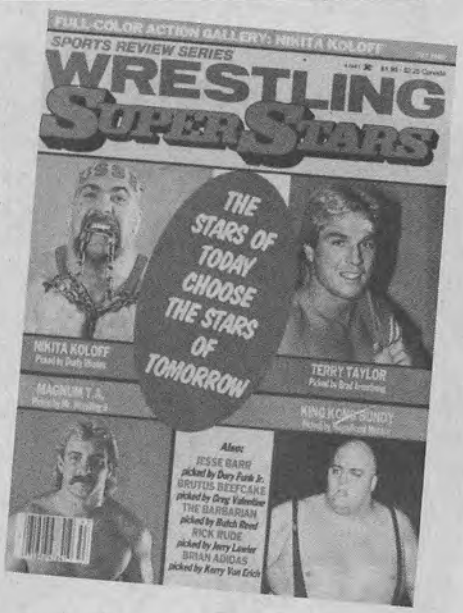

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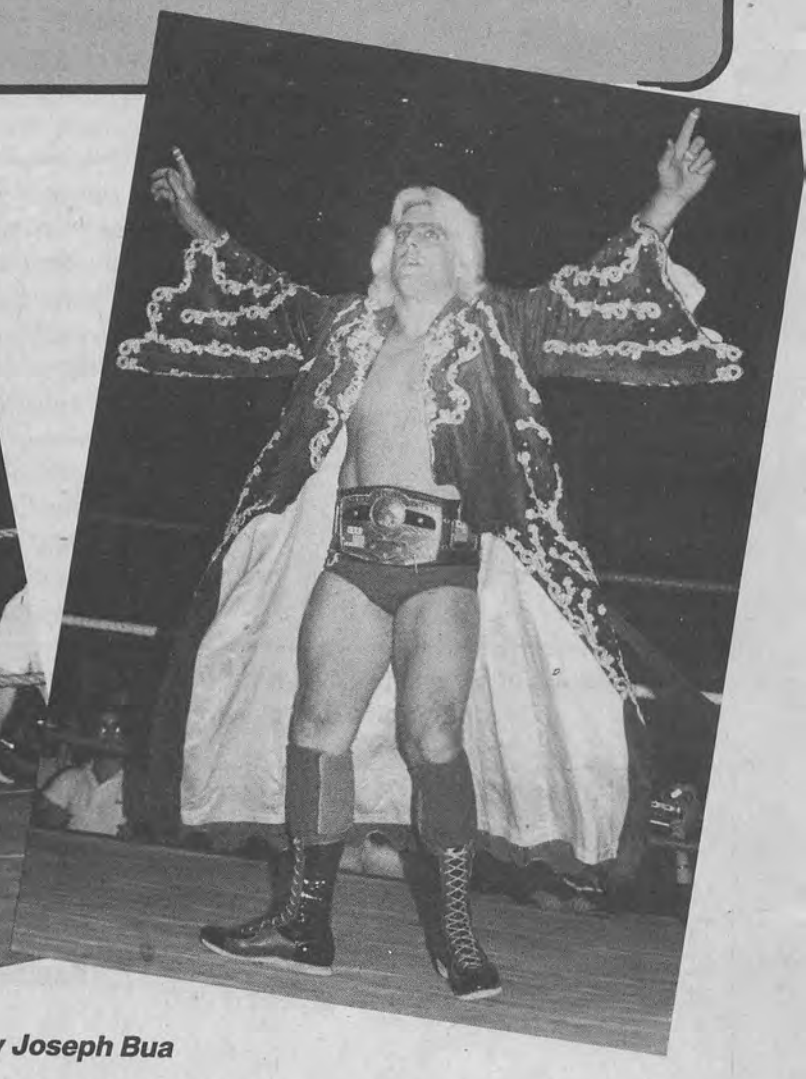
Rick Martel Challenges Ric Flair:

"LET'S HAVE ONE WORLD CHAMPION!"



By Joseph Bua

Since 1960, wrestling fans have been waiting for the one match that will reunite the two world titles and determine who is, indeed, the best wrestler in the world. It is AWA World champ Rick Martel's dream to become that man, and to realize this dream, he is willing to risk everything he's worked so hard to accomplish

RICK MARTEL IS not the type of man who goes out of his way to get press coverage. With his talent and good looks, he doesn't have to. That's why I was confused when the AWA World champion called to tell me that he had a big story for me and that he would like me to come to his office. Rick just doesn't do that sort of thing.

"I just got this from my lawyers," Martel said, handing me a manila envelope.

I pushed the ends of the metal clasp together and pulled out a legal-sized document. It was a contract for a match. "What is all this?" I asked impatiently.

"Keep reading," he said. "Trust me. Just keep reading."

I'm the kind of person who, if I don't have the time, will read only the last chapter of a mystery novel. I videotape my favorite TV shows so I can fast forward through the commercials when I watch them. I don't like to waste time. So, I immediately skimmed to the end of the page. And there was my story.

Martel had signed the contract where it was designated for him to do so. On the other side of the page was an empty space. Typed underneath that space was the name Ric Flair.

Staring at the page, I nodded in approval. "Don't you think it's about time?" Martel asked with the light of excitement flashing in his eyes. Indeed it is. The last time there was one universally recognized world heavyweight champion was in 1960, before a group of Midwestern promoters banded together to form the American Wrestling Association.

"Does Flair know about this?" I asked Martel.

"Not yet. He's in Japan," the AWA champion said.

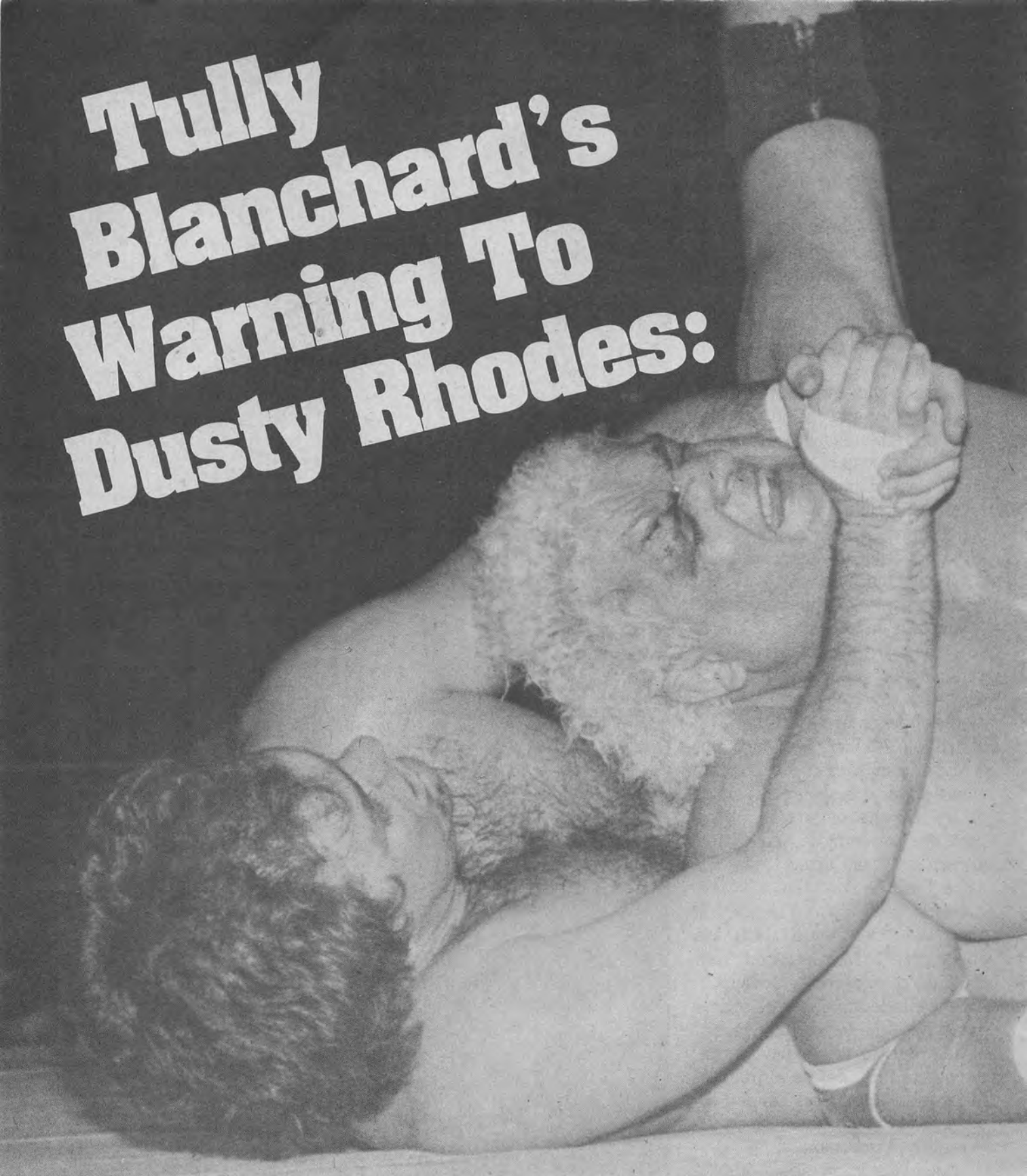
"When? Where? Who's the promoter?" I pointed out to Rick that there would have to be a lot of details worked out before a match of this magnitude could take place. There have been times over the years that both the NWA and AWA champions have wanted to unify their titles, but the terms of the contract could not be agreed upon.

Martel locks up Nick Bockwinkel's arm (above) and hiprolls the former AWA champion (below). Rick feels the time has come to unite the AWA and NWA world titles, and he has issued a challenge to Ric Flair.

"Nothing's worked out," Martel said. "Flair doesn't even know about it. I shouldn't have even told you before Flair found out, but I was so excited about it I had to

(Continued on page 54)

Tully Blanchard's Warning To Dusty Rhodes:

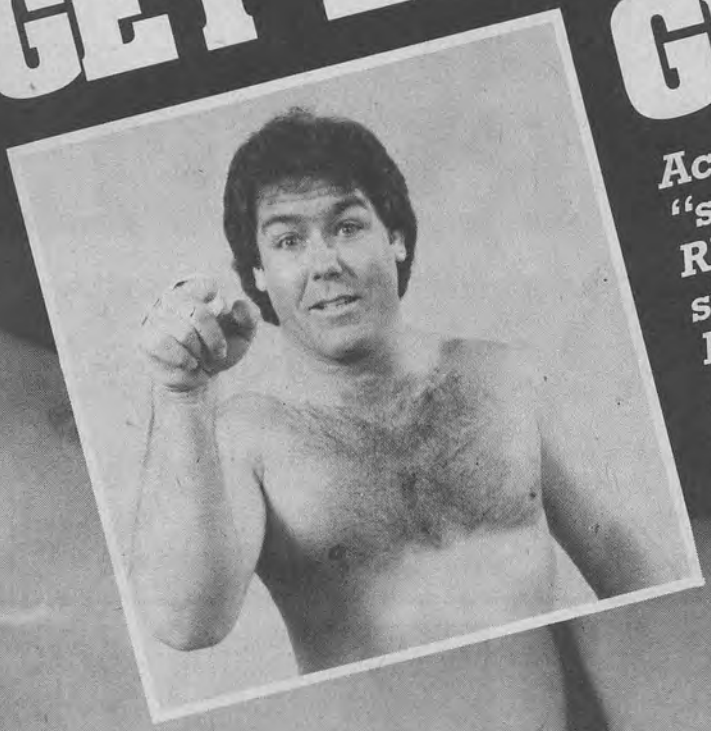


"THERE WAS A guy I used to see all the time who came to all of our football games at West Texas State," Tully Blanchard recounted. "Every home game he was there with his West Texas State banner, rooting us on as we won game after game, week after week, my quarterbacking leading the team to blowout victory after blowout victory.

"Finally at the end of the year, during our victory party, he came over to me and introduced himself as a former quarterback on the West Texas State football team.

" 'You're a very good quarterback,' he told me. 'You're very smart. You think well on your feet.' A lot of people told me that, because, well, it was true. Then, this

GET LOST OR GET HURT!



According to wrestling's "superbrat," Tully Blanchard, Dusty Rhodes has stuck his nose into a situation in which he doesn't belong. Now Blanchard is warning "The American Dream" to walk away from the Mid-Atlantic "superfeud," or pay some hefty consequences

Photos by Eddie Cheslock

guy started telling me about this offensive lineman who played a few years before me. 'This guy was stupid. You would not believe it,' he said. 'On every first-and-goal play his senior year, he went offside. Once, and I wasn't there, but I've heard the story, he tackled his own running back.' We were both on the floor laughing at that one.

"That offensive lineman was Virgil Riley Runnels, better known as Dusty Rhodes, the stupidest man in the history of West Texas State. But," Blanchard said, "the legacy continues, because Dusty is also the stupidest man in professional wrestling today."

Of course, Blanchard's incredible story is untrue, but it is not

(Continued on page 62)

Greg "The Hammer" Valentine:

WRESTLI SAVAGE GENIUS

Wrestling is no stranger to cruelty. It's a sport where pain is an accepted fact. Some men excel at inflicting pain, men who can't separate victory from brutality. And there is one man who has proven himself more savage than the rest. His story will shock you!

EVEN SITTING MOTIONLESS in his dressing room before a match, Greg Valentine looks dangerous. The set features, stolidly confronting anyone and everyone, warns strangers not to approach. His is a miserly face; nothing prominent or inviting. His small eyes are cold, bullets buried in a hard skull. His whole expression is a dare no one would willingly wish to take.

When he's called to the ring for a match, Valentine's body tenses. His mouth sets into an expression one is tempted to describe as a snarl, but it's something crueler. Energy comes into his eyes and his stare seems to consume you. He stands quickly in one fluid motion. Without hesitation, he strides out of the dressing room and into the ring. One can tell when he gets to the arena by the cacophony of boos that literally cause the stands to vibrate. Valentine doesn't seem to notice. His total attention is focused on the opponent waiting in the ring.

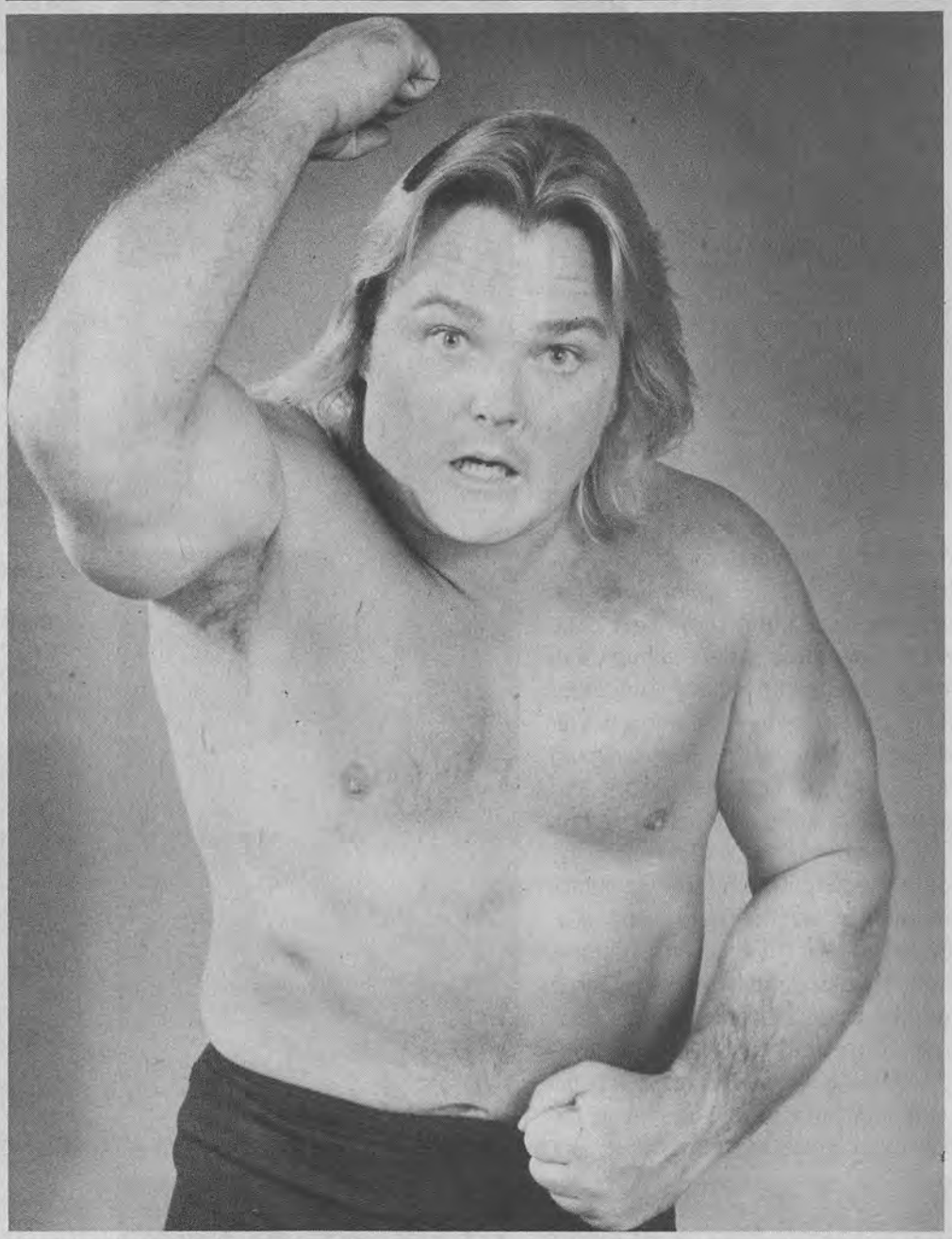
During the match, Valentine gives the crowd a terrifying exhibition of wrestling savagery. He's more than cruel, for cruelty without power is worthless. What is horrifying about Valentine is that his awesome power is at the bidding of his inhuman cruelty. With brutality as the motivation and remarkable athletic skills as the means, Valentine's matches become a study in terror.

His opponents have called him many things, none of them complimentary. It is Roddy Piper who is the most serious critic, his rage tempered by thought. Piper understands that Valentine is much more than simply one of the most hateful and hated men in wrestling.

"He's a savage genius," Piper declares, "and I guess you could call part of that a compliment. He trains himself to instantly know how to inflict the most pain. He's a student of cruelty, forcing himself to know where to hit hardest to cause the most damage. Now there are a lot of guys in wrestling who should be in a cage. The difference between them and Valentine is that Valentine works so much harder at being savage. He delights in discovering fine points to make himself that much more dangerous. The big mistake most wrestlers make is underestimating him. He's a very subtle athlete."

Watching Valentine tear into an opponent proves Piper's point. When the man is at his evil best,

NG'S



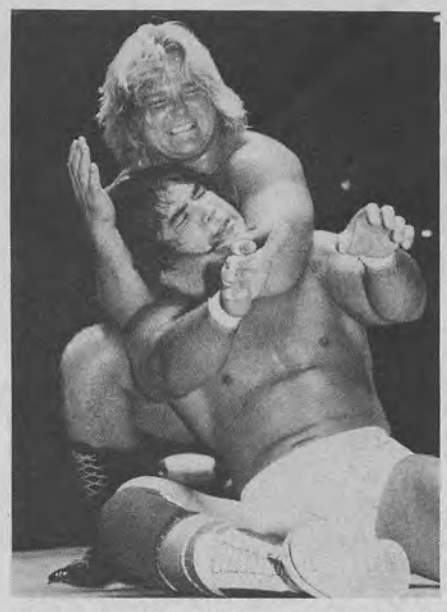
Greg Valentine was given the nickname "The Hammer" for the damage he's inflicted with his right elbow (above). But the elbowsmash is just one part of his savage attack. Valentine strangles Butch Reed (far left) and attempts to break Ric Flair's ankle by slamming it into the ringpost (left).

his foe is almost assured a trip to the hospital. There is no one who can regularly defeat him. Wrestler after wrestler will tell you the man has no obvious weakness.

He also knows no mercy. Even in his matches against young and inexperienced opponents, Valentine pushes himself to the limit. It has gotten to the point that most promoters won't let him take bouts against any but the best. Even if the young grappler begs—and they know a match against Valentine assures instant prominence—no promoter will allow it. They rightfully figure no kid should be destroyed by his own ambition—and Valentine's elbowsmash.

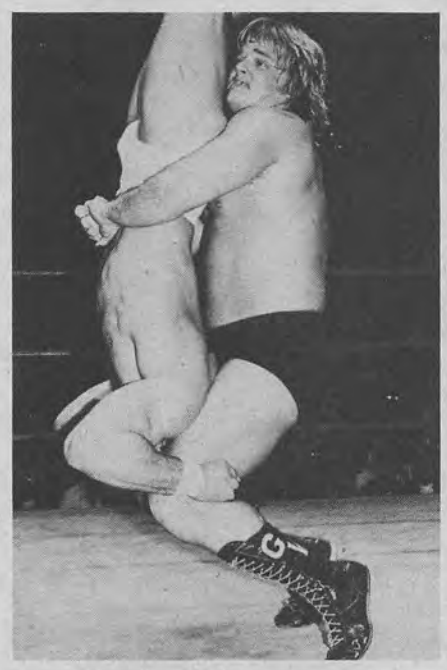
It's the elbowsmash that has won Valentine the nickname of "The Hammer." He leaps into the air and smashes it down on his opponent's body. His favorite target is his foe's head. This gives him the chance of knocking the man senseless and giving him a concussion. It is wrong to assume each elbowsmash has the same power behind it. Valentine can control just how much he wishes to hurt an opponent. He can render a man semiconscious, thereby allowing him more time to brutalize the helpless but supposedly functioning opponent. He can also hit just hard enough that the man becomes instinctively terrified for the rest of the match. No matter what happens, the man will involuntarily cringe the moment Valentine's elbow goes up. This allows Greg to get away with almost anything.

Valentine is also a genius at breaking the rules without detection. He manages to employ illegal

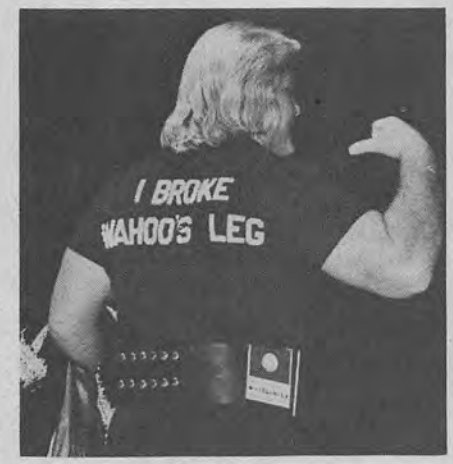


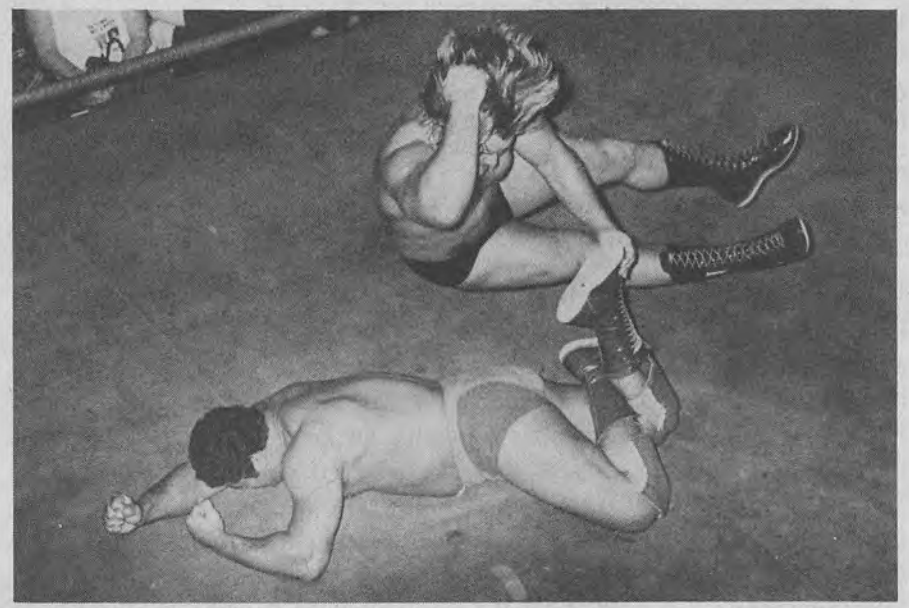
maneuvers for their most brutal effect time and time again. Even the best referees admit they can't cope with Valentine's rulebreaking ability. Though some have suggested there be two referees for each Valentine match, others say it would do no good. Greg is simply too good at disguising his rulebreaking. The man has a sixth sense; he knows where the referee is standing and what the man can't see. Two referees might cause him a little trouble at first, but after three months or so it would be as if neither of them were in the ring.

Valentine is well aware of his reputation and he delights in it. He has even gone so far as to make



A sampling of Valentine's savage genius: against Rick Steamboat (top far left and above left), David Von Erich (above), and Kerry Von Erich (left). The Hammer gains a psychological advantage by publicizing his brutality (below).





An aerial view shows the agonized expression of Pedro Morales as Valentine delivers an elbowsmash while applying an overlapping toehold.

future opponents all too aware of the havoc he's wreaked recently. Foes have gotten photographs of mangled grapplers in the mail, men battered by Valentine. No one has to guess who mailed the letters. Valentine signs the back of the photos, "You're next on my list. Looking forward to hospitalizing you. Greg 'The Hammer' Valentine."

Many people think Valentine is the most dangerous man in wrestling. Others think he's the most dangerous man in the world. His savage genius rampages through professional wrestling like a plague for which there is no cure and little hope. □

THE ROAD WARRIORS

Photos by Scott Romer

Road Warrior Hawk overpowers Terry Funk (above). Hawk and Animal combine to fling Dory Funk Jr. across the ring (top right).

NOW THEY'RE DESTROYING LEGENDS!

Not content just to wrestle the top-rated tag teams in the AWA, The Road Warriors have begun a campaign of destruction against the legendary tag teams of the entire wrestling world. Their first target is a team whose members are former NWA World heavyweight champions, both reigns totaling more than five years of NWA supremacy: tag team legends—The Funks!

By Craig Peters

TERRY FUNK'S FACE contorted into a grimace of pure pain as he clutched his chest and rolled out of the ring under the bottom rope to catch his breath. Precious Paul Ellering stood at the opposite side of the ring, slapped his palm with the day's copy of *The Wall Street Journal,* and laughed smugly.

"What do you think of *that,* Funk?" Ellering screamed across the ring with a laugh. "Makes you feel pretty old, doesn't it? *Hahaha!* How

Road Warrior Animal drives a shoulder into Terry Funk, driving him through the ropes (left). Animal backs Dory into the ropes and punches him in the jaw (above). Terry drops his elbow across Animal's twisted arm (bottom).

does it feel to gorge yourself at the Legion of Doom's banquet of pain and destruction? *Hahaha!"*

As Ellering taunted Terry Funk, Road Warrior Hawk catapulted Dory Funk Jr. into the ropes and hit him in the chest with a forearm smash. Dory collapsed to the mat and Hawk went for the pin, but Dory kicked out at the two-count.

Hawk jumped back, stooped over, placed his hands on his knees, stuck out his tongue, and let loose a hideous, gutteral growl.

"Damn it, Funk, I'll kick your. . ."

At that moment, Terry Funk ran into the ring and hit Hawk in the back. The referee signaled for Terry to leave the ring, but his interference had provided Dory with the incidental diversion he needed to gain a momentary upper hand. Hawk turned to attack Terry, and Dory took him down with a leg sweep. Precious Paul Ellering screamed at his team as if he were a basketball coach calling out a play:

"Number six!"

Animal joined his partner in the ring, and grabbed Dory's left arm as Hawk turned and grabbed his right arm. The two men catapulted Dory into the ropes, grabbed each others hands, and hit him with a double-fisted clothesline as he came off the ropes.

"Beautiful!" Ellering said with pride.

***

Precious Paul Ellering maintains offices in several major cities around the country. I visited his St. Louis office several days after The Road Warriors wrestled Terry and Dory Funk Jr. to a double-disqualification in the Kiel Auditorium.

"It's important that I have a base of operations from which to conduct business," Ellering said. "With a series of offices, and a computer network as a form of interoffice linkage, I'm able to handle business from any office around the country, whether it be in Minneapolis, Chicago, Dallas, St. Louis, or New York."

In front of Ellering, in the middle of his desk, was a thick legal-sized manila folder clearly marked "Contracts."

"Look at this," Ellering said with pride. "Every team in the sport wants a shot at the Warriors. Ev-

Focusing his attention on Animal outside the ring, Dory will lose his advantage over Hawk (above left). Hawk eyes Terry's left fist (above right). Animal's firm headlock prevents Dory from reaching his brother (bottom).

eryone! Here's a contract to wrestle Nick Bockwinkel and Mr. Saito; I don't know about this one, there's not enough money in it for us. Here's another contract with Curt Hennig's and Tom Zenk's names on it; maybe we'll sign this if Hawk and Animal are tired and simply want to obliterate a pair of skinny, inadequate youngsters. And here's one with Jimmy Valiant's and Jerry Lawler's names on it; this is a good possibility. And here's a contract to wrestle The Fabulous Ones; how many chances at our belts do they need to be convinced they can never succeed?" Ellering threw the contract back into the file and sneered sarcastically. "Fabulous Ones. Don't make me laugh.

"You know what my greatest problem as manager of the Warriors is?" Ellering asked. "It's that we've beaten all the teams that have stepped into the ring with us. Every single one. Hawk and Animal have proven their superiority against every team they've gone up against.

"As a manager," Ellering explained, "my job is to find matches that will not only make money for The Legion of Doom, but that will improve the Warriors' standing in the eyes of the wrestling world. That's why beating Tom Zenk and Curt Hennig into senseless submission is virtually worthless to us.

"What I need to do," Ellering continued, "is to find teams that wrestling fans believe in. Teams that have got a lot of experience and respect among the fans. Teams that fans would consider legends.

"Once I find these teams, the rest is simple," Ellering said with a chuckle. "Hawk and Animal simply destroy these teams. 'The Legion of Doom: Your Friendly Neighborhood Demolition Service.' I kind of like the sound of that!"

At that point in the interview, Ellering told me to leave. "I have to draw up a few contracts of my own," he said. "There are a few so-called 'legends' in this sport of tag team wrestling that need to be eliminated. I have business to conduct."

Ellering never told me, or even hinted at, who those teams might be. But there are several combinations active in the sport today that would be likely candidates to wrestle the Warriors.

And there aren't very many teams in the sport who can give these eventual opponents any clue as to how to defeat Hawk and Animal.

And Ellering's chilling words, those that he said to me just before I left his office, continue to reverberate in my mind:

"The Warriors' road of destruction is paved with the shattered remains of dozens of tag teams from coast to coast. The legends of tag team wrestling are our next targets. And after that—well, after that we'll see, won't we!" □

Jimmy Valiant's Message To The Fans

"IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO BOOGIE WOOGIE!"

By Jimmy Valiant

It's a pleasure to look at pictures of fans "boogie woogieing" behind yours truly, Handsome Jimmy Valiant. Oh, you might notice that I still had my beard in this photo. Let me assure you that I didn't lose my strength when Paul Jones and his hired Assassins cut it off!

Jimmy Valiant is a man on the move, a man of energy, a man of excitement. His popularity is greater than ever before, and his dynamic and outgoing personality has been heralded as unique in a sport where flashy individuals are commonplace. In this exclusive story, Valiant offers his personal message and philosophy to his fans

HELLO OUT THERE, brothers and sisters, hello all my soul patrol friends and mates. *Whoo!* This is brother Jimmy talking to you all out there and let me tell you—this is an honor, a privilege, a once-in-a-lifetime chance to talk to all of you directly and to the heart.

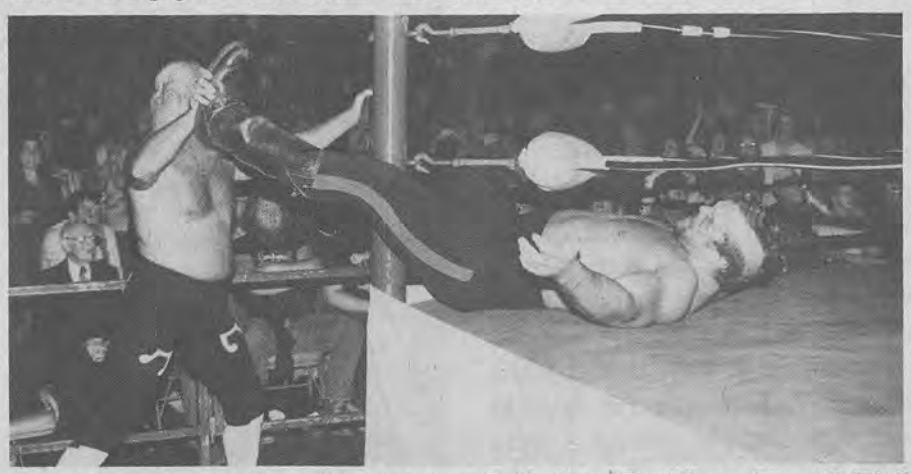
Because the heart is where the home is, you know what I'm saying? And my heart is dancing like my feet, and my left foot is Baryshnikov and my right foot is Michael Jackson. And I'm dancing, daddy, my heart is dancing and my fingers are dancing. Yes they are, my fingers are dancing over this here typewriter, and my heart is dancing because I know I'm talking directly to *all* my fans. Yeah!

This is 1984, my friends, and we all know what 1984 means. We all know about George Orwell and *1984* and this year should be a reminder to you. Just like Valentine's Day is a reminder to tell the ones you love that you love them, 1984 is a reminder that we've got to be free, we've got to be open, we've got to be honest, we've got to boogie woogie!

Yeah! Boogie woogie! That's right, my brothers and sisters, it's time for you to get down, it's time for you to boogie woogie! Because 1984 is gonna be the year of the Valiant, the year of the Handsome One, the year of the Boogie Woogie Man!

You see, my friends, what you have got to understand is that Handsome Jimmy is ready to fly, you hear what I'm saying? Now just do me this one favor and look at the cover of this magazine, look at the beautiful photograph taken by my man, Bill Apter.

Now I ask you this one question, my friends: What is wrong with this picture? You know what's wrong, and I know what's wrong, and that slimy snake Paul Jones knows what's wrong, and those two Assassins, they know what's wrong, yes they do, both of them, the skinny one and the fat one.



Above: Look at Jones cringe with fear when someone lays a hand on him. Below: Road Warrior Animal was singing at a different pitch when I got through with him, if you know what I mean.

See, my people, what's wrong with this picture is that when it was taken, my handsome face was adorned by a beautiful long beard. That handsome beard is gone, and it's all because of Paul Jones and The Assassins that I'm bald from my nose to my chin.

More hair than Chewbacca, that's what it was, and Paul Jones done gone and took it away. And have you ever looked closely at the hair on Paul Jones' head? Well look close, people, because it's not long for this world. Ain't no man gets away with taking my beard and not paying for it with his own hair.

And I have a hunch that when I do get my hands on that skunk, that whole head of hair is going to come off in one piece, because I have serious doubts about whether there's roots in that hair, you know what I'm saying? I'm

talking phony and fake and artificial and worthless, just like the promises and boasts that come sliding out of his mouth like chicken fat out of the palm of your hand.

But this is just one piece of business, my friends, and there's more to be done. And I need your help, my people, but before I tell you how I need your help I want to tell you about the jobs that lay ahead, because there's work to be done, hard work, and it may take some time.

There's the matter of the NWA World tag team championship, because I don't think Cowboy Bob Orton and Don Kernodle are proper representatives for professional wrestling today. They don't set the kind of example that should be set for professional wrestling, they don't have class, they don't have grace, they don't have style, they don't have good looks.

And we all know that Handsome Jimmy boogie woogies with style and grace and a handsome face, isn't that right?

And there's the matter of the lowdown dirty dog that manages Orton and Kernodle, and of course I'm talking about Gary Hart, my friends. You see, Gary Hart is a bottomless pit of nastiness, a man with no good in his soul, a man who couldn't even woogie if he had to, much less boogie woogie.

Handsome Jimmy is a boogie woogie wonder, and I'm here to take care of these people. I want to do some business to Paul Jones and The Assassins, I want to do some boogie woogie action on the heads of Gary Hart and his Orton and Kernodle. And there's people like The Road Warriors who think they can come to the Mid-Atlantic and take things over, and they've got to be taught that they can't.

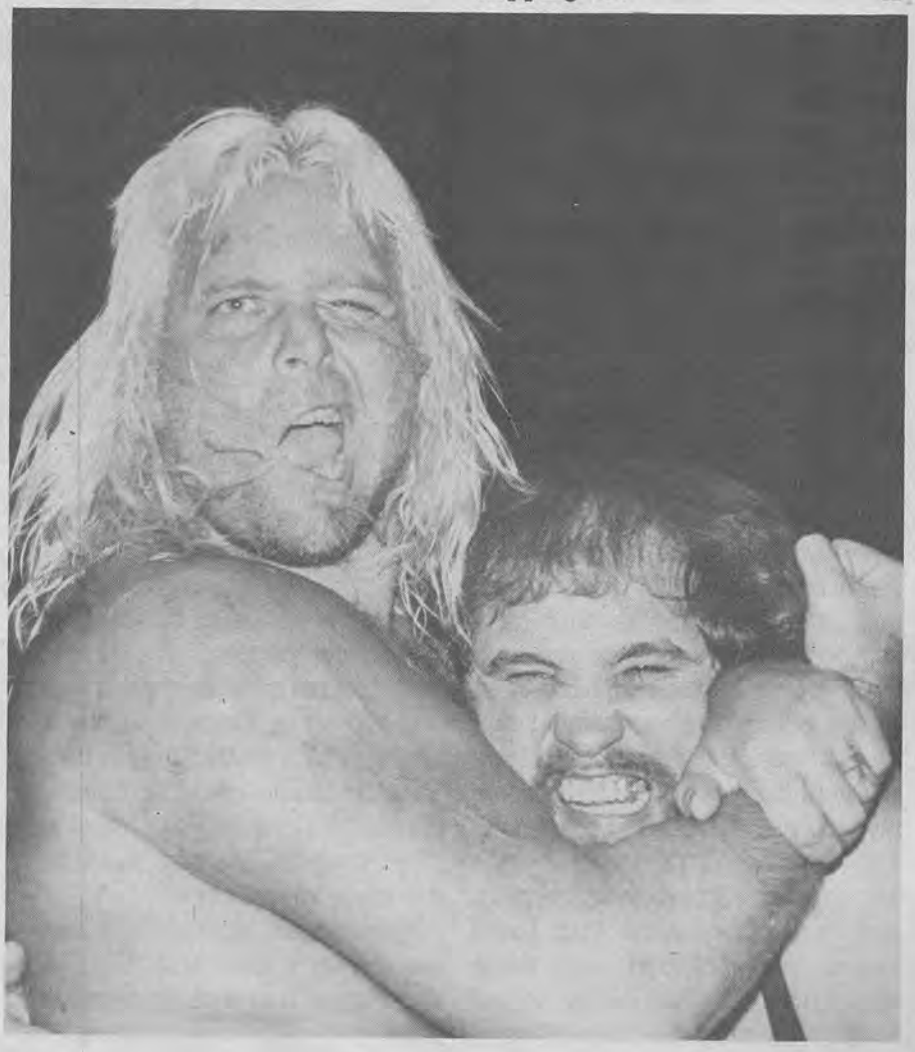
And now it's time for you people to know what your job is. It's time for you to take up the flag, to stand on your feet, to stand up and be counted, to boogie woogie till you can't boogie no more!

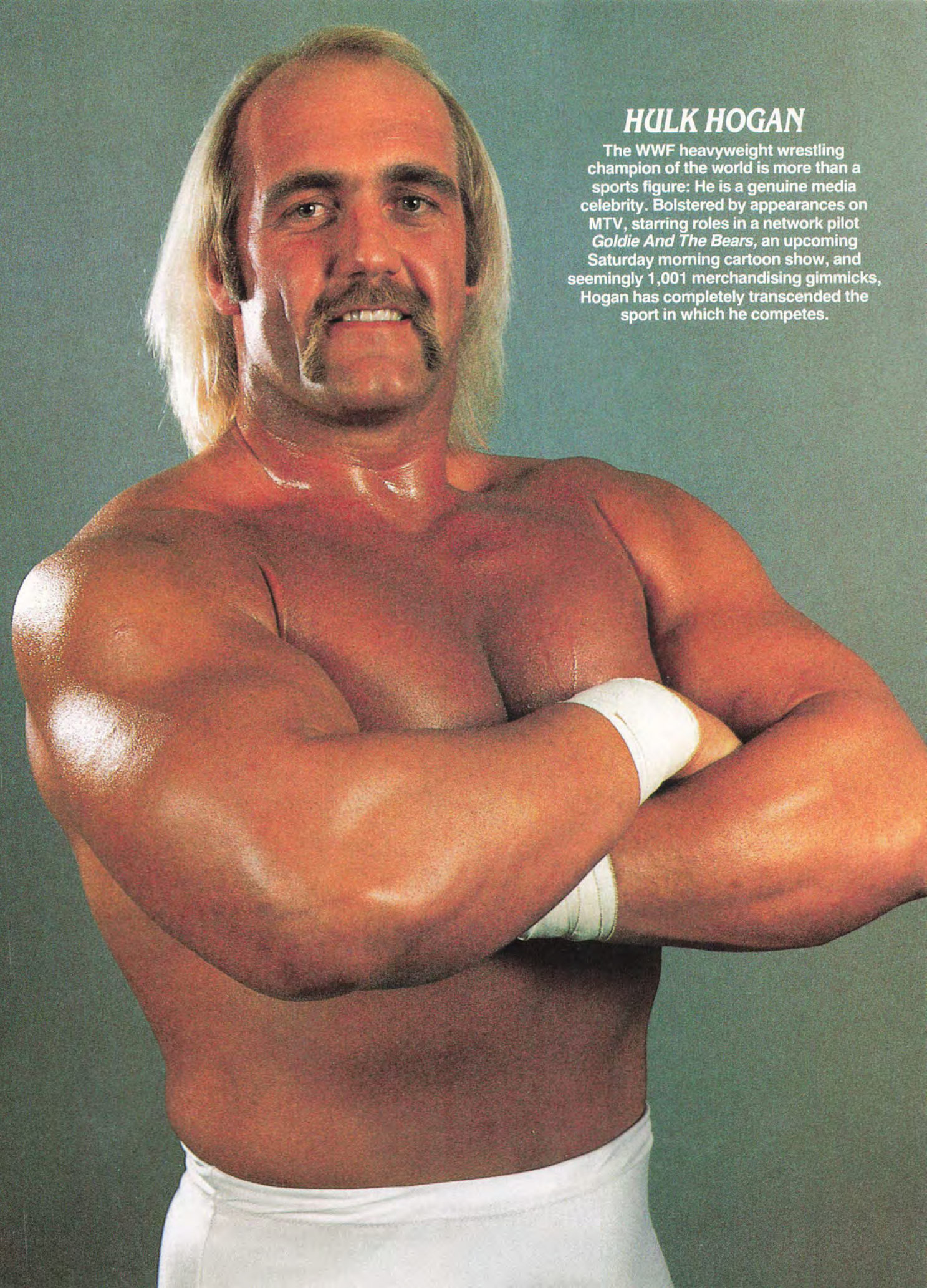
Above: You people let me know what to do to Dick Slater. Below: The Boogie Woogie Man does his best singin' when he's puttin' a hurtin' on people like Don Kernodle.

See, I need you all behind me if I'm going to be successful with my jobs, you hear what I'm saying? I need to hear your cheers, I need to read your mail, I need to see your smiles, I need to know that you're out there, that you support me, that you want to see these jobs done, that you're boogie woogieing along with me. Because when I know these things, it's all of us doing the job together, doing the kind of a job that I can't do all alone.

And together we can do it, my friends, we can do it all, together we can get it on and be taking care of business.

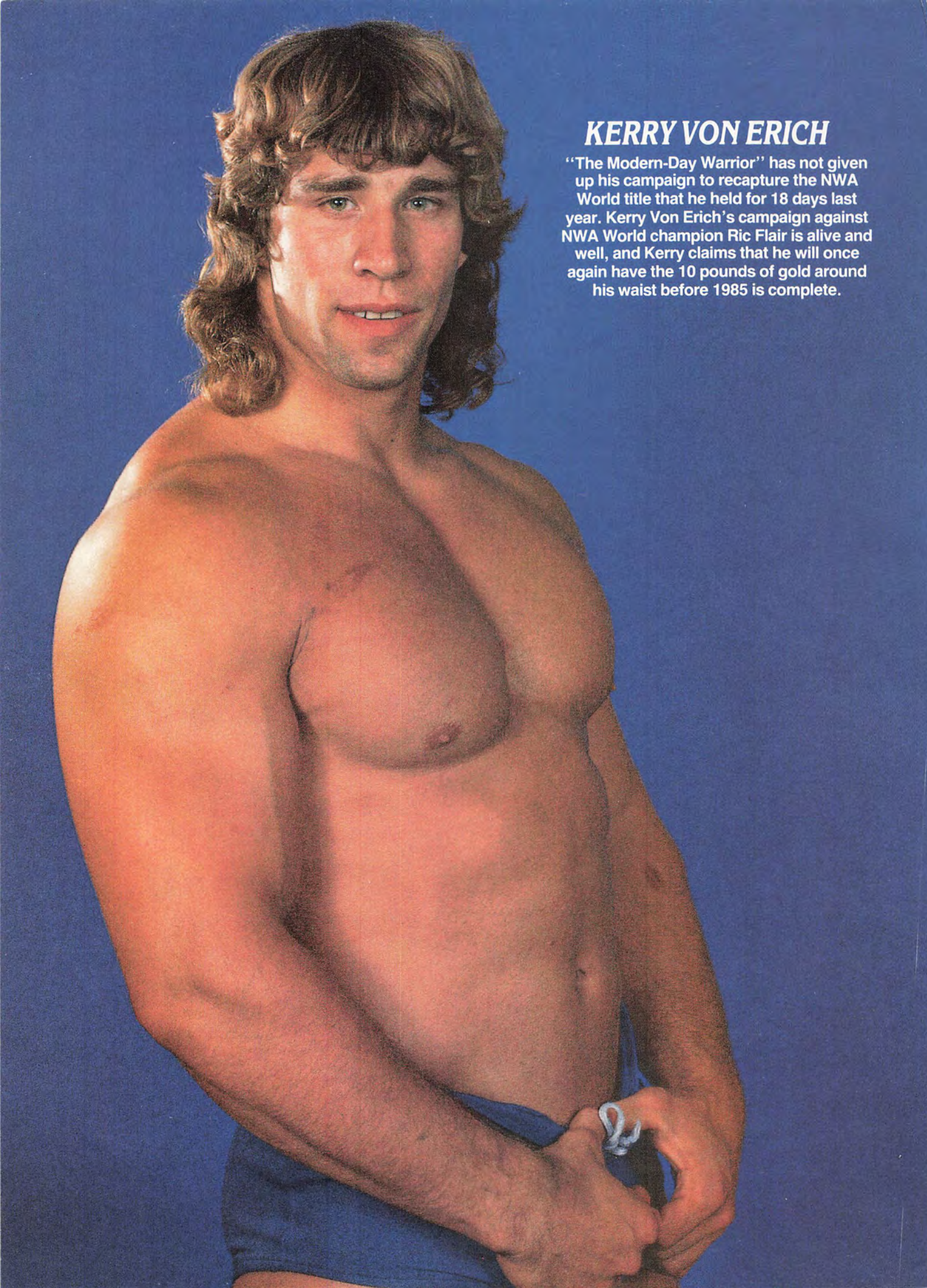
And when business is taken care of, my people, that's when the real party begins, my friends. That's when we'll be boogie woogieing till dawn, and there'll be no stopping us! □





HULK HOGAN

The WWF heavyweight wrestling champion of the world is more than a sports figure: He is a genuine media celebrity. Bolstered by appearances on MTV, starring roles in a network pilot *Goldie And The Bears,* an upcoming Saturday morning cartoon show, and seemingly 1,001 merchandising gimmicks, Hogan has completely transcended the sport in which he competes.



KERRY VON ERICH

"The Modern-Day Warrior" has not given up his campaign to recapture the NWA World title that he held for 18 days last year. Kerry Von Erich's campaign against NWA World champion Ric Flair is alive and well, and Kerry claims that he will once again have the 10 pounds of gold around his waist before 1985 is complete.

DAVID SHULTZ

The man who calls himself "Dr. D" is slowly but surely returning to the forefront of the wrestling world as he wrestles throughout the NWA in the Northeast. But the ultimate goal for Dr. D is to receive a return match against WWF kingpin Hulk Hogan who, Shultz claims, has been sidestepping him for too long.

THE ROAD WARRIORS

Is there any other tag team in the sport of professional wrestling that can stand up to The Road Warriors? Perhaps not. Precious Paul Ellering's Legion of Doom has set new standards for tag team wrestling, and continues to amass a record of victories that is unsurpassed in the sport today.

Scouting Report

A NO-HOLDS-BARRED LOOK AT THE WWF

In this feature, *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* will examine the relative strengths and weaknesses of wrestling's top stars. There will be no punches pulled as the sport's athletes undergo the harshest scrutiny anywhere in the wrestling world

HULK HOGAN

HOME TOWN: Venice Beach, California
WEIGHT: 302
YEARS AS PRO: 6
RATING: No. 3 in Top 10; WWF champion

STRENGTHS:

- Enormous size and strength. At 6' 8", Hogan towers over most opponents. He is almost impossible to overpower, and most challengers soon wilt before his onslaught.
- Condition. Hogan continues to hone his body with an intense gym regimen.
- Charisma. His appearance in the ring sends fans into a frenzy of cheering, and Hogan draws strength from the wall-to-wall noise.

WEAKNESSES:

- Regarded by many experts as only an average wrestler. Hogan is always in danger of being outwrestled by someone with superb scientific knowledge.
- Hogan's out-of-wrestling commitments are sure to rob him of his psych in the ring. Recent matches have proven this.
- His teaming with a non-wrestler, Mr. T, has forever hurt his reputation as a serious athlete.

OTHER COMMENTS: Won the WWF title from Iron Sheik on January 23, 1984 . . . Has become the sport's most recognizable star . . . Sadly shows no interest in wrestling a strictly scientific challenger . . . The only wrestler to ever be on the cover of *Sports Illustrated.*

OUTLOOK FOR '85: The Hulkster's second year as champion should be more difficult than his first. With attendance down at many WWF shows, Hogan may be forced into a more reckless style to try to win back the loyalty of some fans who doubt his wrestling ability. Needs an untainted victory over another fan favorite to cement his legend.

RODDY PIPER

HOME TOWN: Glasgow, Scotland
WEIGHT: 231
YEARS AS PRO: 12
RATING: No. 4 in WWF

STRENGTHS:

- Has no peer when it comes to psyching out opponents. Piper makes his foes angry *before* they get into the ring, and an angry wrestler is a sloppy wrestler.
- Piper is an underrated wrestler with many superb skills. He has a solid scientific background, although he rarely calls on it.
- Piper has perhaps the keenest mind in the sport. He has managed many wrestlers, and he knows every style and can adjust accordingly in the ring.

WEAKNESSES:

- Not much strength. Piper is too light and weak to ever overpower a superheavyweight. Usually compensates by breaking the rules.
- Totally untrustworthy. Through the years, Piper has turned his back on his friends as soon as he feels they can no longer do him any good. Paul Orndorff is just the latest example.
- Isn't active enough. Often, Piper would rather insult a wrestler in "Piper's Pit" than wrestle him in the ring.

OTHER COMMENTS: Was voted 1984's Most Hated Wrestler . . . Came to the WWF in early-1984 after a successful stint in the Mid-Atlantic and Georgia areas . . . Sustained a serious ear injury at the hands of Greg Valentine while NWA U.S. champion . . . His appearance in Cyndi Lauper's *Goonies* video made him look more ridiculous than rowdy.

OUTLOOK FOR '85: Seems to be in a slump since his "WrestleMania" loss. At this point, Piper seems directionless, uncertain whether to go after Hogan's WWF belt or try to teach Orndorff a lesson. Remains one of the sport's most unpredictable figures.

PAUL ORNDORFF

HOME TOWN: Brandon, Florida
WEIGHT: 253
YEARS AS PRO: 6
RATING: No. 6 in WWF

STRENGTHS:
- Orndorff is perhaps the WWF's finest scientific wrestler. Combines strength, speed, and a strong amateur background.
- Extreme self-confidence. Orndorff has proven he can make it in any sport. A former professional football player.
- Fantastic condition. Orndorff has a perfect wrestling body, and he keeps it sharp with continual work in the gym.

WEAKNESSES:
- Too temperamental. Can't take criticism from either his peers or the fans. Feels he knows everything there is to know.
- By spending the last year as a rule-breaker, Orndorff may have lost his once vast scientific skills.
- May never recover from being pinned and humiliated in WrestleMania.

OTHER COMMENTS: Says he has undergone a complete attitude change . . . Must focus his attention on either exacting revenge from Piper or going after Greg Valentine's Intercontinental title . . . Will have to live forever with the knowledge that he couldn't defeat Mr. T, a rank amateur in wrestling.

OUTLOOK FOR '85: Now that he has fired Bobby Heenan, Orndorff can return to the scientific style that made him one of wrestling's brightest prospects. By befriending Hulk Hogan, Orndorff seems to have given up on the idea of becoming WWF champion.

JIMMY SNUKA

HOME TOWN: Fiji Islands
WEIGHT: 250
YEARS AS PRO: 16
RATING: No. 9 in WWF

STRENGTHS:
- The most courageous athlete in sports. His dives from the top rope—and from the top of a 15-foot-high cage—are legendary.
- Strong and fast. Snuka combines one of wrestling's best bodies with the quickness of a man 35 pounds lighter.

WEAKNESSES:
- A slow starter. Snuka almost always absorbs too much punishment before he takes the advantage in a match.
- Needs a manager. Snuka's greatest moments came when he was piloted by, first, Capt. Lou Albano, and then, Buddy Rogers. Without a manager, Snuka takes too many worthless matches.
- Lost in the WWF shuffle. Snuka rarely receives main-event matches, despite his extraordinary ability.

OTHER COMMENTS: Went from being the most hated wrestler in the WWF to the most loved in 1983 . . . Voted (along with Ray Stevens) Tag Team of the Year in 1980 . . . Was also voted 1983's Most Popular Wrestler.

OUTLOOK FOR '85: Snuka has been shunned recently by WWF promoters. Whether he can return to main-event status depends on a number of factors, some of which the federation tries to keep secret from the public. Newspaper accounts of some of his out-of-wrestling behavior have hurt his career.

GREG VALENTINE

HOME TOWN: Seattle
WEIGHT: 243
YEARS AS PRO: 14
RATING: No. 8 in Top 10; No. 1 in WWF

STRENGTHS:
- A tough competitor with great stamina. Will battle until he has nothing left to give.
- Has the most world-class experience of any top-rated WWF wrestler. Perhaps the most effective wrestler in the federation.
- His figure-four leglock is one of wrestling's best finishing maneuvers.

WEAKNESSES:
- Lack of size and only average speed. Valentine *needs* to break the rules to be successful.
- Managerial shifts have hurt him. Seemed to be sharper under the tutelage of Capt. Lou Albano than under current manager Jimmy Hart.
- Style of hard-nosed, non-flashy wrestling is better suited for the NWA and AWA than the WWF.

OTHER COMMENTS: A three-time Most Hated Wrestler in the *PWI* year-end polls (1975, 1979, and 1983) . . . Son of the legendary Johnny Valentine . . . A former two-time NWA U.S. champion . . . Nicknamed "The Hammer" for his crunching elbowsmashes . . . Won the Intercontinental title from Tito Santana in September 1984.

OUTLOOK FOR '85: Most experts don't believe Valentine will finish the year as Intercontinental champion. He can expect tough challenges from former champ Tito Santana, Junkyard Dog, and Paul Orndorff. Manager Hart is fine handling bookings, but he leaves a lot to be desired as a strategist.

JOHN STUDD

HOME TOWN: Los Angeles
WEIGHT: 364
YEARS AS PRO: 14
RATING: No. 8 in WWF

STRENGTHS:
- Big (6' 10") and strong. A tough foe at all times because of his size.
- More-than-adequate speed for a man his size. Studd is faster than most other superheavyweights.

WEAKNESSES:
- Has been in the WWF too long. Studd has suffered more pinfall losses than any other top contender. Fans know he is incapable of defeating either Hulk Hogan or Andre the Giant.
- Lack of style. Studd is a kicker and puncher, and most wrestlers know how to turn back a limited offensive like his.
- Humiliated at WrestleMania when he was bodyslammed by Andre. May never be the same.

OTHER COMMENTS: Came to the WWF after a stint in Georgia . . . Has been bodyslammed numerous times, despite his insistence to the contrary . . . Trained by legendary wrestler Killer Kowalski.

OUTLOOK FOR '85: There seems to be little that Studd can accomplish in the WWF. He has had many title shots, against both Bob Backlund and Hulk Hogan, and has been unsuccessful. His best bet is to try and collect the $25,000 bounty put on the head of Paul Orndorff by Studd's manager, Bobby Heenan.

JUNKYARD DOG

HOME TOWN: New Orleans
WEIGHT: 260
YEARS AS PRO: 7
RATING: No. 5 in WWF

STRENGTHS:

- Football background. Dog grinds out victories the way a strong fullback grinds out yardage.
- Popularity. Outside of Hulk Hogan, JYD is the most popular wrestler in the WWF. Truly loves his fans, and wants to win for them.
- Excellent finishing maneuver. His "big thump" is strong and conclusive.

WEAKNESSES:

- Has gotten a little out of shape recently. Should trim off about five to 10 pounds of excess fat.
- Doesn't wrestle intelligently. JYD had Greg Valentine on the verge of defeat at WrestleMania, but he let The Hammer escape with his Intercontinental belt.

OTHER COMMENTS: A former North American champion . . . Played pro football with the Green Bay Packers . . . A former headliner in the Mid-South, he is confined to semi-main events in the WWF . . . His popularity may exceed Hulk Hogan's in the near future.

OUTLOOK FOR '85: Many were surprised when he decided to team with Tito Santana instead of concentrating on Valentine's Intercontinental title. Look for him and Santana to challenge WWF tag team champs Nikolai Volkoff and Iron Sheik very soon.

KEN PATERA

HOME TOWN: Portland, Oregon
WEIGHT: 256
YEARS AS PRO: 12
RATING: No. 12 in WWF

STRENGTHS:

- Arguably the strongest man in wrestling. Represented U.S. as a weightlifter in the 1972 Olympics.
- Amateur background. Patera was a standout wrestler in college, although he no longer uses those skills.

WEAKNESSES:

- Going nowhere. Patera used to be a main-event wrestler in the WWF, but currently he is not getting top matches. Perhaps manager Bobby Heenan is moving other stablemates faster than Patera.
- Too short. Patera finds it difficult to use his best strength maneuvers on wrestlers, like Hulk Hogan, who tower over him.

OTHER COMMENTS: Has been successful in all three major federations . . . Despite boasts to the contrary, Patera *never* won a medal at any Olympics, although he does hold many weightlifting records. . . Currently tag teaming with stablemate Big John Studd.

OUTLOOK FOR '85: Like his partner Studd, Patera may have gone as far as he can in the WWF. Perhaps he and Studd can rebuild their careers by making their tag team a successful unit, and challenging teams like Barry Windham and Mike Rotundo, or JYD and Tito Santana.

MAGNIFICENT MURACO

HOME TOWN: Sunset Beach, Hawaii
WEIGHT: 274
YEARS AS PRO: 15
RATING: No. 2 in WWF

STRENGTHS:

- One of the most powerful men in wrestling. Can win many matches on sheer strength.
- Extremely agile. Out-wrestled Hulk Hogan in their first Madison Square Garden meeting and almost won the coveted WWF belt.
- Tough and mean, with great courage. Doesn't have to break the rules, but doing so makes him that much more dangerous.

WEAKNESSES:

- Inexperienced manager. Mr. Fuji, Muraco's manager, has cost his wrestler quite a few matches. Muraco would be better off on his own.
- Bad attitude. Muraco feels the entire world is against him, and he wastes too much time arguing with fans at ringside during matches.
- Another wrestler who would do well to lose a few pounds. It would help Muraco's speed, and not affect his power.

OTHER COMMENTS: A former two-time WWF Intercontinental champion . . . Has had bitter feuds with Jimmy Snuka and Pedro Morales, which can reerupt at any time . . . Maybe the most underrated wrestler in the WWF.

OUTLOOK FOR '85: Once his series with Hogan is finished (assuming Muraco doesn't win the WWF title), Muraco may be forced into tag team competition, a part of wrestling he is not good at. If a fan favorite takes Valentine's Intercontinental belt, look for Muraco to try to regain his old title.

TITO SANTANA

HOME TOWN: Mission, Texas
WEIGHT: 245
YEARS AS PRO: 10
RATING: No. 7 in WWF

STRENGTHS:

- Has superb speed. Santana never wastes motion and knows how to successfully use his blinding quickness to win many matches.
- Championship experience. Santana's reign as Intercontinental champion gave him a confidence boost that has helped his career.
- A good learner. Santana has successfully added many holds to his repertoire, including the figure-four leglock.

WEAKNESSES:

- Has never fully come back from the knee injury that sidelined him in late-1984. The effects of the injury may be more psychological than physical.
- Lacks great strength. Santana would be smart to try and bulk up and add muscle to his arsenal.

OTHER COMMENTS: Has had his greatest success in the WWF . . . Held the WWF tag team title (with Ivan Putski) from October 1979 to April 1980 . . . Defeated Magnificent Muraco in February 1984 to begin his seven-month reign as Intercontinental champion.

OUTLOOK FOR '85: A year of questions for Tito: Does he concentrate on tag teaming, or does he put all his energies into regaining the Intercontinental title from Greg Valentine? Can he emotionally recover from the serious knee injury he suffered last year?

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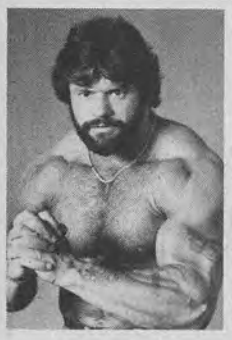


BILLY HAYNES

HOME TOWN: Portland, OR
WEIGHT: 245
YEARS AS PRO: 4
POSITION IN RATINGS: No. 3 in Pacific Northwest

STRENGTHS:
- Training. Few wrestlers are as devoted to physical conditioning as Billy Haynes.
- Sportsmanship. After a shady adolescence, Haynes is determined to be succesful within the framework of the rulebook.
- Full-nelson. While most wrestlers use the full-nelson to weaken an opponent, Haynes has the strength to use it as an effective finishing maneuver.

WEAKNESSES:
- Recent attack by Rip "The Crippler" Oliver in World Class area seems to have made him wary of returning to the thick of the ring wars.
- Instability. Haynes doesn't stay in an area long enough to accomplish all he is capable of accomplishing.

OTHER COMMENTS: A former champion bodybuilder who reshaped his body for the sport of wrestling . . . Also a former champion racquetball player and amateur boxer . . . Voted 1984's Most Improved Wrestler of the Year.

OUTLOOK FOR '85: Following the name change from Billy Jack to Billy Haynes, his career truly seems to have floundered. Haynes *must* choose a definite course for his future and stick with it. If he can become more settled, he can win a world title before the end of the year.

NIKITA KOLOFF

HOME TOWN: Moscow, Russia
WEIGHT: 275
YEARS AS PRO: 2
POSITION IN RATINGS: No. 2 in Top 10 tag teams

STRENGTHS:
- Natural power. Koloff has one of the best physiques in the sport.
- Coaching. Nikita's uncle, Ivan Koloff, is giving him the benefit of his vast professional experience.
- Amateur background. Nikita received the benefit of government-supported Soviet training before coming to the U.S.

WEAKNESSES:
- Lack of scientific knowledge. Knowing he can usually get by on power, Koloff hasn't developed his pro wrestling skills.
- Has not taken the time to study the styles of many of his American opponents.
- At times, gets careless in the ring, which has proven costly.

OTHER COMMENTS: In addition to strength, Nikita has superb stamina . . . Has been called "The Russian Road Warrior" . . . Finished a close first runner-up in 1984 Rookie of the Year voting . . . Still many years away from his peak.

OUTLOOK FOR '85: With Nikita and Ivan Koloff's victory over Dusty Rhodes and Manny Fernandez for the NWA World tag team title, Nikita is in a position of great power in the NWA. The Koloffs will likely spend the rest of 1985 defending those belts.

HARLEY RACE

HOME TOWN: Kansas City, KS
WEIGHT: 268
YEARS AS PRO: 25
POSITION IN RATINGS: No. 2 in Missouri ratings

STRENGTHS:
- Peerless experience. Is the only man to have held the NWA World title on seven occasions.
- Fast-thinker. Harley is able to devise new ring strategies over the course of a lengthy match.
- Courage. Race will not risk a loss—and his career—to execute maneuvers such as flying headbutts.

WEAKNESSES:
- Outdated strategies. Relies on ring tactics that are outmoded against some of today's young wrestlers.
- Speed. Agility is hampered by his increasing bulk.

OTHER COMMENTS: Many observers feel that Harley is several years past his prime, while others feel that he is still capable of winning the NWA belt an eighth time . . . Recently came close to defeating NWA champion Flair in a match in New Jersey's Meadowlands.

OUTLOOK FOR '85: Race's style is that of the old-school wrestler. His success depends on whether that style can hold up against the youthful exuberance typified by many young competitors in the 1980s. Race will find it difficult to stay ahead of a youthful pack of NWA challengers.

RONNIE GARVIN

HOME TOWN: Montreal, Quebec
WEIGHT: 231
YEARS AS PRO: 20
POSITION IN RATINGS: No. 8 in Top 10; No. 5 in NWA; No. 1 in Georgia

STRENGTHS:
- Superb repertoire. Garvin has had two decades to master his scientific skills.
- Boxing skills. A former boxer, Garvin can use his "hands of stone" to slug it out when necessary.
- Renewed confidence. Garvin's lengthy National title reign has had an immeasurable effect on his mental approach to the sport.

WEAKNESSES:
- Relationship with the fans. Despite his experience, Garvin is often swayed by the fans' wishes during a match.
- Rib injury sustained early in 1984 remains susceptible to reinjury.

OTHER COMMENTS: For a man of his many years in the sport, Ronnie Garvin looks and wrestles as if he were in his mid-20s . . . The older brother of AWA contender Jim Garvin, but a completely different type of wrestler and man.

OUTLOOK FOR '85: Garvin must break out of the Georgia area and defend his National title in other parts of the country in order for his career to continue to grow in 1985 as it did in 1984.

MAGNUM T.A.

HOME TOWN: Chesapeake, VA
WEIGHT: 245
YEARS AS PRO: 5
POSITION IN RATINGS: No. 6 in Top 10; No. 1 in NWA; No. 1 in Mid-Atlantic

STRENGTHS:
- Consistency. Not blessed with tremendous size or strength, Magnum has developed into a bedrock of stability, always levelheaded, always aware of the situation.
- Uses the abdominal stretch to weaken opponents.
- Belly to belly suplex is a devastating finishing maneuver.

WEAKNESSES
- Often gives up size and strength to opponents.
- Does not possess an alternate finishing maneuver.

OTHER COMMENTS: Buoyed by his U.S. title victory over Wahoo McDaniel, Magnum has his sights set on the NWA championship . . . The fan support that Magnum receives spurs him on to greater achievement.

OUTLOOK FOR '85: 1985 should be Magnum T.A.'s coming out party. Every respected wrestling critic has Magnum on his "to be watched closely list." If Magnum could expand his repertoire and develop a submission hold, then he'll have to be considered a candidate for the NWA World title.

DUSTY RHODES

HOME TOWN: Austin, TX
WEIGHT: 302
YEARS AS PRO: 16
POSITION IN RATINGS: No. 4 in Top 10; No. 3 in NWA; No. 3 in Mid-Atlantic

STRENGTHS:
- Experience, ring savvy. The psychological advantage of having held the NWA championship twice.
- Extremely good mobility for a man of his considerable bulk.

WEAKNESSES:
- Lack of concentration. Sometimes lets the fans' cheers make him sloppy.
- Susceptible to cuts. Rhodes is a known bleeder and this can distort his vision and sap his strength.

OTHER COMMENTS: As he grows older, Dusty must utilize his experience more and accept the fact that he must preserve energy and not attempt to go full speed for an entire match . . . Dusty's reputation is often enough to win his matches . . . His "Slam That Sucker Down" tour has proven extrememly popular and successful.

OUTLOOK FOR '85: Losing the NWA tag team championship has given Dusty time to concentrate on regaining the NWA heavyweight title. He's expressed a strong desire to capture the belt and fans can expect some titanic Ric Flair-Dusty Rhodes battles in 1985.

TOMMY RICH

HOME TOWN: Hendersonville, TN
WEIGHT: 248
YEARS AS PRO: 8
POSITION IN RATINGS: No. 2 in Georgia

STRENGTHS:
- Well-schooled. Rich's knowledge of the sport's basics is a key to his success.
- Cross-bodyblock. Tommy can stun an opponent and win a match in an instant with this maneuver.
- Popularity. The fans often inspire Rich to victory.

WEAKNESSES:
- Tends to get sidetracked from his career goals by getting bogged down in feuds with one opponent.
- Conditioning. Rich needs to return to the gym and develop a strong workout regimen in order to increase his strength, speed, and stamina.

OTHER COMMENTS: Beat Harley Race and held the NWA World title for four days in 1981 . . . A former Rookie of the Year . . . Spent some time as a rulebreaker and has contemplated doing so again.

OUTLOOK FOR '85: After winning the NWA title four years ago, Rich found out how difficult it is to reach a career goal early and then have to reach that goal again. More than most wrestlers, Rich needs a manager to guide his career. If he can keep out of feuds as he's promised to do so many times before, 1985 can be a big year for him.

RIC FLAIR

HOME TOWN: Minneapolis, MN
WEIGHT: 243
YEARS AS PRO: 12
POSITION IN RATINGS: NWA World champion; No. 1 in Top 10

STRENGTHS:
- Possesses one of wrestling's most conclusive submission holds in the figure-four leglock.
- Proven physical and mental endurance by owning the NWA title on three separate occasions.
- In the prime of his career.

WEAKNESSES
- Takes a great deal of punishment in many of his title defenses.
- Although proven effective, Flair might rely on the figure-four too much.
- His weakness for certain luxuries of life can make Flair soft and complacent.

OTHER COMMENTS: Now that more title matches include a no-disqualification clause, Flair must curb his tendency of getting himself disqualified to retain his title . . . As champion, Flair is the target of every contender. He adds fuel to his opponent's fire by parading around arrogantly, an attitude that might someday backfire.

OUTLOOK FOR '85: This is a make or break year for Flair. With Sgt. Slaughter and Bob Backlund now active in the NWA, along with Kerry Von Erich, Dusty Rhodes, and many others, Flair will find no shortage of determined grapplers gunning for his title. If he can make it through this year, then he will serve notice to the wrestling community that he is one of the greatest champions of all time.

RICK RUDE

HOME TOWN: Robbinsdale, MN
WEIGHT: 246
YEARS AS PRO: 2
POSITION IN RATINGS: No. 6 in NWA; No. 1 in Florida

STRENGTHS:
- Youth, agility, and power. Rude's sinewy strength fills out the prototype wrestling body.
- Aggressiveness. Rude has tasted success by winning the Southern heavyweight title and now he wants more.

WEAKNESSES:
- Impatience. Rude is still green with inexperience and mustn't rush his career, thus risking setbacks in the ring and with his confidence.
- Still tentative when facing a veteran wrestler.

OTHER COMMENTS: Rude won his title after taking on Percy Pringle as manager . . . His switch to rulebreaker seems to be permanent, and that stability can help his career . . . Must be wary of Pringle, who is interested only in his own success and would not hesitate to dump Rude if someone else came along.

OUTLOOK FOR '85: Rick Rude's potential is unlimited. With the experience he gains in defending his belt, Rude could be a candidate for an NWA title shot by the end of the year. If he can drop Pringle and wrestle on his own, then the year would become a success.

TULLY BLANCHARD

HOME TOWN: San Antonio, TX
WEIGHT: 235
YEARS AS PRO: 7
POSITION IN RATINGS: No. 4 in Mid-Atlantic

STRENGTHS:
- Aggressive, ferocious, stop-at-nothing attitude toward his matches.
- Strong amateur background complements his rulebreaking style.
- Football experience gives him the guts and ability to stand up under pressure.

WEAKNESSES:
- Often gets himself disqualified because of his ruthless tactics.
- Becomes involved in too many feuds.

OTHER COMMENTS: With the acquisition of Baby Doll as his valet, Blanchard has an added weapon in his arsenal . . . Called "the John McEnroe of wrestling" . . . His father, Joe Blanchard, a former wrestler, provided early advice and training.

OUTLOOK FOR '85: Blanchard has the moves, the tenacity, and the breeding to be a champion. His attitude and list of priorities must change. 1985 will test his desire to become one of the best in the sport.

Scouting Report

A NO-HOLDS-BARRED LOOK AT THE AWA

In this feature, *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* will examine the relative strengths and weaknesses of wrestling's top stars. There will be no punches pulled as the sport's athletes undergo the harshest scrutiny anywhere in the wrestling world

RICK MARTEL

HOME TOWN: Quebec City, Quebec
WEIGHT: 236
YEARS AS PRO: 13
RATING: AWA World champion; No. 2 in Top 10

STRENGTHS:

- Multiple finishing maneuvers. Most wrestlers rely on a single finisher; Martel uses several including the flying vault, flying bodypress, and flying headscissors.
- Condition. Martel is in superb shape, possessing both strength and speed.
- Experience. Martel is in the rare position of combining relative youth with vast experience.

WEAKNESSES:

- Sometimes *too* honorable. Martel never strays from the rulebook, and can be taken advantage of by wily rulebreakers.
- Lets opponent set pace of match. Martel tends to wrestle from behind, which is a risky proposition.

OTHER COMMENTS: Captured the AWA World title from Jumbo Tsuruta on May 13, 1984 . . . Has been characterized as "a blue-collar champion" . . . Has made a point of defending against both scientific and rulebreaking challengers.

OUTLOOK FOR '85: As Martel enters his second year as champion, he seems to have been rattled by the recent psychological tactics of Jim Garvin. Martel will have to learn to deal with that kind of attack while fending off likely challenges from Butch Reed, Michael Hayes, and Hacksaw Duggan.

SGT. SLAUGHTER

HOME TOWN: Parris Island, SC
WEIGHT: 310
YEARS AS PRO: 8
RATING: No. 10 in Top 10; No. 4 in AWA

STRENGTHS:

- Slaughter's cobra clutch and "Slaughter cannon" are two extremely powerful weapons.
- Fan support. The cheers and love of the fans drives Slaughter to do his very best in every match.
- Background. Slaughter's experience as a rulebreaker provides him with that much more of an advantage over rulebreaking opponents.

WEAKNESSES:

- Inadequate speed. Slaughter needs to improve his mobility and agility.
- Doesn't recover quickly enough from punishment. Once Slaughter's opponents gain an advantage, they can maintain that advantage as long as they wrestle smart.

OTHER COMMENTS: Was voted 1984's Inspirational Wrestler of the Year . . . Rose to his greatest fame during his feud with The Iron Sheik . . . Has wrestled Ric Flair for the NWA World title several times since leaving the WWF for Pro Wrestling U.S.A. in January 1985.

OUTLOOK FOR '85: Slaughter seems to be floundering since leaving the WWF, where his mission was clear: Destroy The Iron Sheik. Slaughter needs to find a clear purpose in his career, before that career is irrevocably damaged.

BUTCH REED

HOME TOWN: Kansas City, MO
WEIGHT: 265
YEARS AS PRO: 7
RATING: No. 8 in AWA

STRENGTHS:
- Strength. Reed works out daily to maintain and improve his already considerable strength.
- World-class athletic ability. Reed is experienced in football, baseball, and weightlifting as well as wrestling.
- Amateur background. Reed has excellent scientific knowledge.

WEAKNESSES:
- Inconsistent ring philosophy. Reed has bounced back and forth between rulebreaker and fan favorite several times.
- Jealous streak. Seeing a friend succeed instead of himself can set Reed off on a rage.
- Ego problems. Reed's self-centeredness causes him to wrestle for glory rather than victory.

OTHER COMMENTS: Known as "Hacksaw" Butch Reed . . . Defeated former AWA and NWA World champion Gene Kiniski in his debut match . . . Received All-America honors in football in his senior year at Central Missouri State University.

OUTLOOK FOR '85: Reed's recent move to the AWA and his conversion back to rulebreaker could be the most important development in his career; he is certain to challenge Rick Martel for the AWA World title.

NICK BOCKWINKEL

HOME TOWN: Beverly Hills, CA
WEIGHT: 245
YEARS AS PRO: 31
RATING: No. 6 in AWA

STRENGTHS:
- Unflappable in the ring. After 31 years as a pro, Bockwinkel is very difficult to catch off-guard in any situation.
- Maintains excellent condition. Bockwinkel has always been concerned with physical fitness, and brings a young man's stamina to his years of experience.

WEAKNESSES:
- Needs a manager. When Bobby Heenan guided his career, Bockwinkel seemed unbeatable; alone, Bockwinkel is drifting like a ship without a rudder.
- Peak years past. Bockwinkel is wrestling on the basis of experience rather than on constantly improving himself.

OTHER COMMENTS: Has held the AWA World title three times . . . Wore the AWA belt from November 8, 1975, through February 22, 1984, except for one length of 10 months, and another of two months.

OUTLOOK FOR '85: Bockwinkel has been splitting his time about equally between singles matches and tag team matches with Mr. Saito. Unless he chooses to devote his time to one or the other, he is unlikely to have championship success at either.

BOB BACKLUND

HOME TOWN: Princeton, MN
WEIGHT: 242
YEARS AS PRO: 12
RATING: No. 3 in AWA

STRENGTHS:
- Peerless amateur background. Backlund is one of the best scientific wrestlers anywhere.
- Unquestioned stamina. Backlund has wrestled some of the sport's toughest men to one-hour draws.
- Championship experience. For six years, Backlund defended the WWF heavyweight title.

WEAKNESSES:
- Obsessed with past. Backlund finds it difficult to realize he is no longer WWF champion. He must put the past behind him and move on.
- Too influenced by fans. Backlund is overly concerned about the fans' feelings toward him. He should worry more about his own attitude toward the sport.

OTHER COMMENTS: Was voted Wrestler of the Year in 1980 and 1982 . . . Also voted Inspirational Wrestler of the Year in 1977 and 1981, and Rookie of the Year in 1976 . . . Wrestling's greatest goodwill ambassador.

OUTLOOK FOR '85: Backlund has to make the final adjustments to a contender's life as he works his way up the AWA ladder to challenge World champion Rick Martel. A scientific match with Martel is the kind of match Backlund likes, and he could win the World title this year.

JIM GARVIN

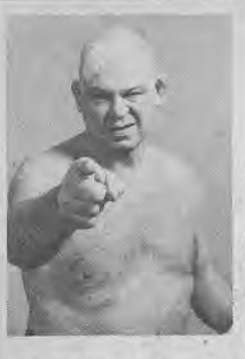
HOME TOWN: Tampa, FL
WEIGHT: 235
YEARS AS PRO: 16
RATING: No. 2 in AWA

STRENGTHS:
- Master of psychological warfare. Garvin knows precisely what buttons to push in order to psych out his opponent.
- For all of Garvin's braggadocio, he is an excellent technical wrestler.
- Extreme self-confidence. Garvin seldom enters a match with doubts about his skills.

WEAKNESSES:
- Overdependence on Precious. Garvin tends to get cocky in his matches, depending on his valet to be an extra set of eyes, and encouraging Precious to interfere should he run into trouble.
- Size. At 235 pounds, Garvin is a relative lightweight in the world of wrestling.

OTHER COMMENTS: Jim is the youngest of three wrestling Garvins, including Terry and Ronnie . . . Managed his brothers in tag team matches early in his career . . . Once had Sunshine as his valet, but fired her and obtained Precious in the World Class area.

OUTLOOK FOR '85: It is likely that Garvin will continue to challenge Rick Martel for the AWA World title. A return to the World Class area in the near future would serve as an added boost to his career.



BARON VON RASCHKE

HOME TOWN: Berlin, Germany
WEIGHT: 271
YEARS AS PRO: 19
RATING: No. 15 in AWA

STRENGTHS:
- Clawhold. Von Raschke possesses a clawhold that may be second only to the Von Erichs' in power and effectiveness.
- Amateur background. While growing up in Germany, and later in the United States, Von Raschke compiled an excellent record as an amateur.

WEAKNESSES:
- Wasted energy. There's no need for Von Raschke to goosestep around the ring when that energy could better be used against his opponent.
- Lack of a concise style. Von Raschke's ring style is confused at best, and he tends to take excessive time deciding on an attack plan.

OTHER COMMENTS: Held AWA World tag title with Crusher before being defeated by The Road Warriors on August 25, 1984 . . . Also held AWA tag belts with such partners as Bruiser, Red Bastien, and Billy Robinson.

OUTLOOK FOR '85: Following the loss of the tag team belts to The Road Warriors, Von Raschke has been content to remain mired in mediocre singles matches. He would do well to take up the challenge of trying to wrest the Americas title from Larry Zbyszko.

TONGA KID

HOME TOWN: Nuku'alofa, Tonga
WEIGHT: 226
YEARS AS PRO: 2
RATING: No. 7 in AWA

STRENGTHS:
- Courage. The Tonga Kid is not afraid to perform risky aerial maneuvers against opponents more experienced and powerful than he is.
- Need not fly to win. The Tonga Kid has an excellent knowledge of the scientific basics of the sport.

WEAKNESSES:
- Recklessness of youth. Just 20 years old, Tonga Kid still labors under the false illusion that he is invincible.
- Inexperienced. Only two years as a pro limits the range of opponents Tonga has faced.

OTHER COMMENTS: Once wrestled with Johnny Rich and Scott Armstrong in the Southeast area as "The R.A.T. Patrol" (*R*ich, *A*rmstrong, *T*onga) . . . His brother, Tonga Kid II, recently entered the pro ranks.

OUTLOOK FOR '85: The Tonga Kid's future is wide open. A scientific encounter with AWA World champion Rick Martel would undoubtedly be a top contender for match of the year, while the tag team of Tonga and Tonga II could quickly rival The Rock 'n' Roll Express or The Fabulous Ones in terms of teamwork, agility, speed, and excitement.

LARRY ZBYSZKO

HOME TOWN: Pittsburgh, PA
WEIGHT: 248
YEARS AS PRO: 13
RATING: No. 1 in AWA

STRENGTHS:
- Training. Zbyszko learned the basics of professional wrestling under one of the greatest wrestlers of all time, Bruno Sammartino.
- Versatility. Zbyszko's ring style combines strength with speed, agility, and an uncanny level of intelligence.

WEAKNESSES:
- Talks to the fans. Zbyszko is prone to arguing with ringsiders, which allows a quick opponent to attack from behind.
- Lack of concentration. Zbyszko is unable to maintain a single method of attack for more than a few minutes during a match.

OTHER COMMENTS: As a slap in the face to former mentor Bruno Sammartino, Zbyszko calls himself "The New Living Legend" . . . Zbyszko's cage match with Bruno was voted 1980's Match of the Year . . . Also voted Most Hated Wrestler of the Year in 1980.

OUTLOOK FOR '85: Zbyszko will be working to establish his championship, the Americas title, as a major prize in the wrestling world. If Pro Wrestling U.S.A. continues to highlight solely AWA rather than combined AWA and NWA competitors, the value of that title may be undermined.

JERRY BLACKWELL

HOME TOWN: Stone Mountain, GA
WEIGHT: 474
YEARS AS PRO: 12
RATING: No. 2 in NWA; No. 9 in AWA

STRENGTHS:
- Agile despite size. Blackwell knows how to use his weight to his advantage, and can move around the ring with surprising speed.
- Uses weight as a weapon. The full force of his 474 pounds behind a flying elbowsmash has crippling potential.

WEAKNESSES:
- Few scientific skills. Blackwell tends to rely on his weight as a way to win matches.
- Stamina. Although Blackwell knows how to use his weight in a match, carrying 474 pounds over the length of a one hour match will sap Blackwell's strength and make him more vulnerable the longer the bout goes on.

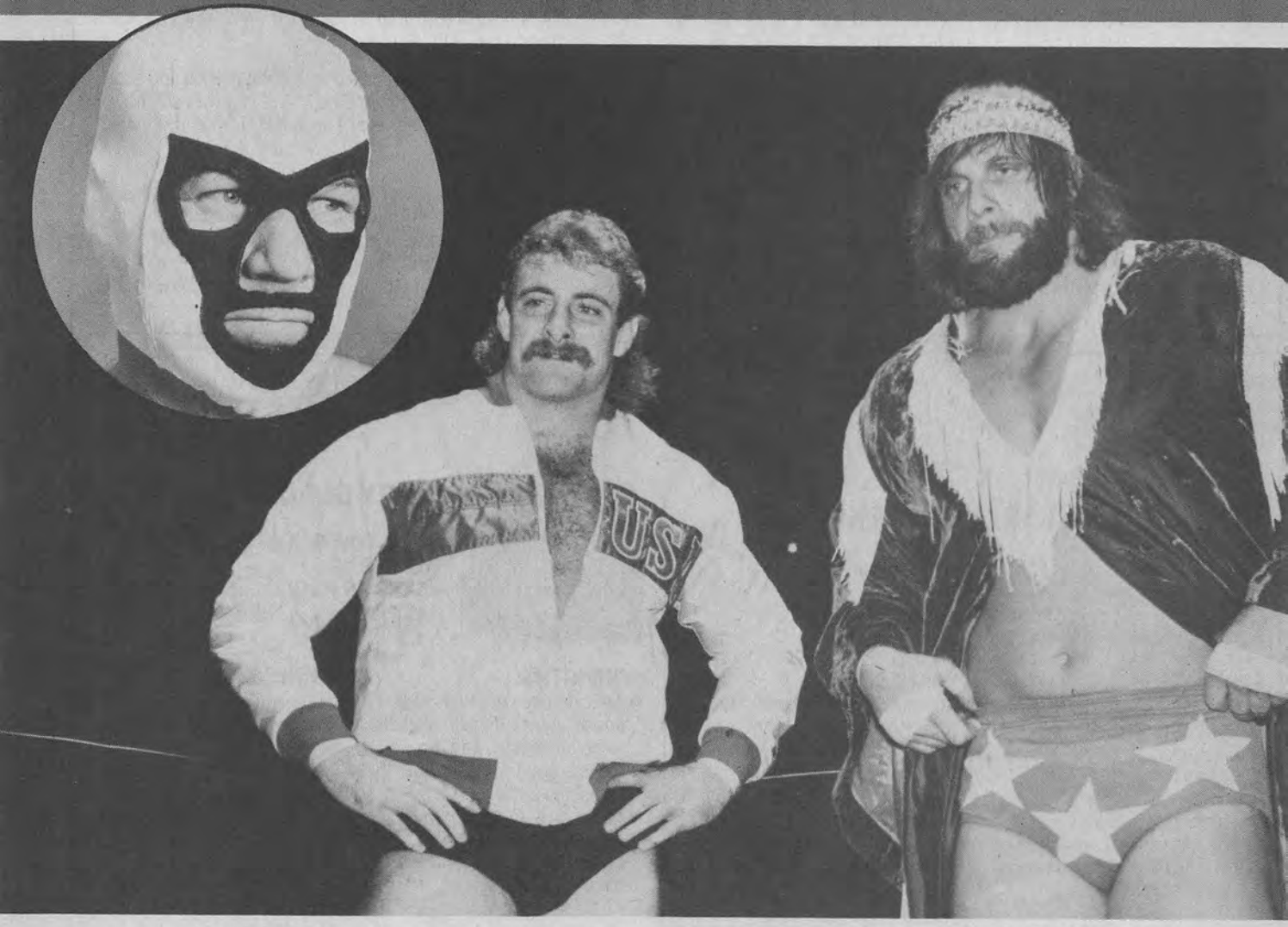
OTHER COMMENTS: Jerry Blackwell currently holds the Missouri title, which he won from Harley Race on November 16, 1984, in St. Louis . . . Maintains heavy match schedules in both the AWA and the NWA.

OUTLOOK FOR '85: Blackwell's combined AWA and NWA schedule gives him a versatility that few AWA competitors can claim. It is likely that he will be able to hold the Missouri title for most of 1985, while searching for the right partner to take on AWA tag champs, The Road Warriors.

Mr. Wrestling II's Explosive Story

By Joseph Bua

"MAGNUM T.A. IS TURNING BAD!"

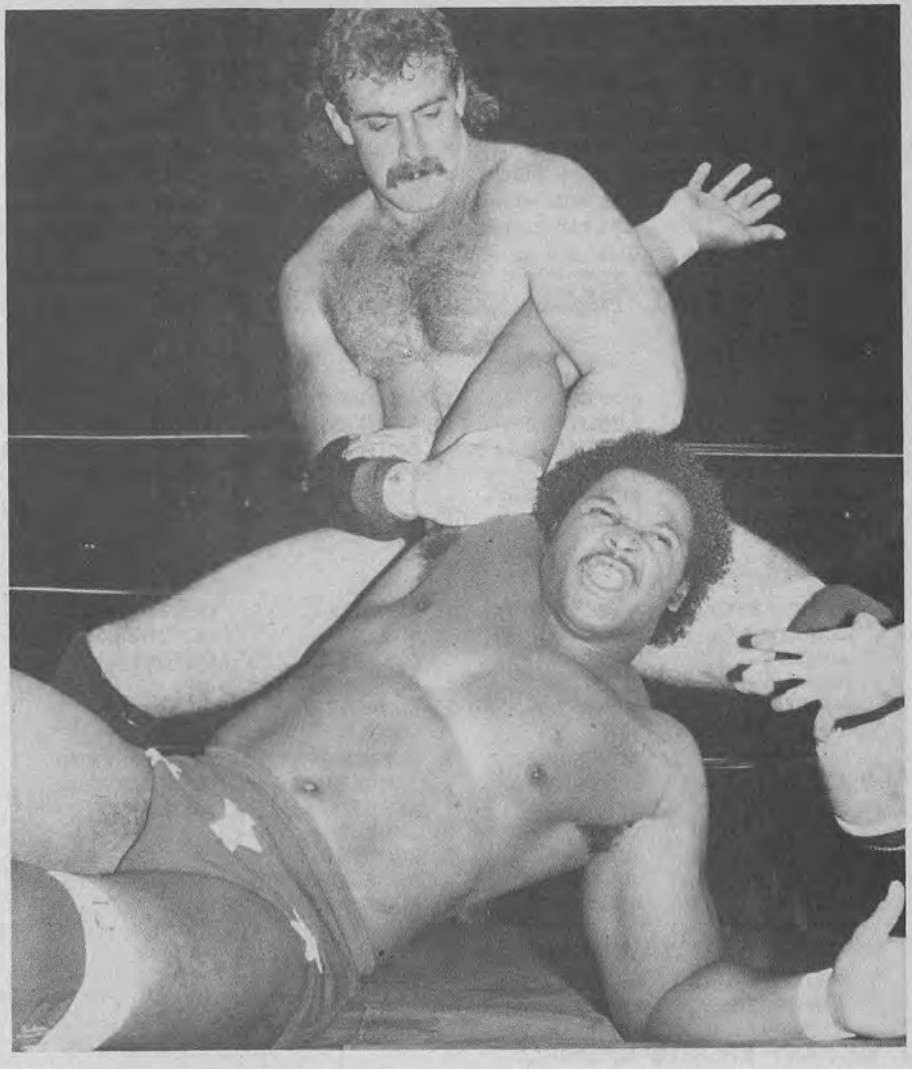


Mr. Wrestling II opposed Magnum T.A.'s alliance with Lanny Poffo, convinced that this association would lead to a change in his tag team partner's wrestling philosophy. A visit to the office of Pro Wrestling Illustrated provided Wrestling II with photographic proof that this startling change might have already begun

Photos by Floyd See & Sam Lowe

I HAD ONLY one worry on my mind. How was I going to conduct an interview with Mr. Wrestling II in a crowded restaurant? Being one of the most recognizable stars in the sport, he would surely be hounded for autographs and asked to pose for photos with fans. II made it very clear that his time in New York would be very short, cut even shorter by the photo session he had scheduled with Senior Editor Bill Apter. If I wanted an interview of any length, I would have to fit myself into his schedule. After our lunch, I would drive him to the airport.

Apter worked with Wrestling II in the photo studio adjacent to my office. I revised my interview questions for the third time as I sat at my desk waiting for the two to walk past my open door. I had planned to do a feature on II's recent coaching achievements. With his help, Brett Sawyer had ascended to the National heavyweight title. Currently, he was working with Terry "Magnum T.A." Allen, with whom he also held the Mid-South tag team title belts.



The photograph of Magnum T.A. posing with Randy Savage (opposite page) has greatly upset Magnum's coach, Mr. Wrestling II (inset). Will Terry Allen forsake scientific wrestling (above) and join the rulebreaking Savage and Angelo Poffo (left)?

I planned to ask II about the differences in the roles of coach and manager. It was well known that his relationship with Allen was currently being strained by Allen's alliance with Lanny Poffo. II was against the friendship, saying that the enitre Poffo family had long been proponents of the rulebreaking aspects of professional wrestling. Magnum T.A. answered that although II was his coach, and a good coach, he wasn't his manager and he couldn't run his career. T.A. said that the choice of friends and tag team partners would be his own. Although they disagreed, they

(Continued on page 56)

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INTRODUCTION

(Continued from page 6)

WWF Intercontinental champion. Valentine's career seems as busy as ever, and this story becomes even more appropriate in light of "The Hammer's" recent accomplishments.

Our April 1985 edition included the feature "The Road Warriors: Now They're Destroying Legends" (page 29). The fact of the matter is, Paul Ellering's Legion of Doom destroys any tag team that crosses its path. Many have tried to wrest the AWA world tag team title from the Warriors, but Hawk and Animal continue to reign supreme as the single-most powerful and awesome combination in the sport.

Jimmy Valiant knows there is strength in numbers. He asked the fans to join him in his war against Paul Jones and his men (page 32).

The career of the Boogie Woogie Man, Jimmy Valiant, seems to be inextricably tied to the love that the fans have for him. In "Jimmy Valiant's Message To The Fans: 'It's Time For You To Boogie Woogie!'" (page 32), Valiant implores his fans to rally behind him in his war against Paul Jones, a war that is continuing to this very day. Valiant's message was heard, and the fans have been

(Continued on page 52)

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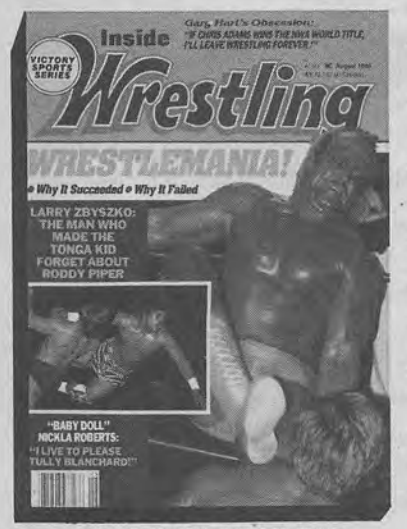
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• Why It Succeeded • Why It Failed
LARRY ZBYSZKO: THE MAN WHO MADE THE TONGA KID FORGET ABOUT RODDY PIPER
"BABY DOLL" NICKLA ROBERTS: "I LIVE TO PLEASE TULLY BLANCHARD!"

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INTRODUCTION

(Continued from page 50)

Mr. Wrestling II gives discusses strategy with Magnum T.A. before a tag team match. When Magnum teamed with Randy Savage, II charged that "Magnum T.A. is turning bad" (page 48).

extremely supportive of Jimmy, most recently at The Great American Bash in Charlotte, North Carolina, where Valiant defeated Paul Jones in a dog collar chain match.

A new feature that was added to *PWI* in 1985 was "Scouting Reports," which takes a no-holds-barred look at top wrestling stars. Examining the strengths and weaknesses of each man, "Scouting Reports" is the most honest assessment of wrestlers' talents available anywhere in the world. Now, for the first time anywhere, you can read the "Scouting Reports" for all three major federations in one magazine. Turn to page 39 for WWF Scouting Reports, page 42 for AWA stars, and page 45 for a look at the NWA (from the October, August, and September 1985 editions, respectively).

"Mr. Wrestling II's Explosive Story: 'Magnum T.A. Is Turning Bad!'" (page 48) was originally presented in our June 1984 issue. In reality, it was Wrestling II who turned bad, for the sake of injecting an even greater sense of responsibility and concern into Magnum's developing style in the Mid-South area. As you read this story, you'll see how Wrestling II served as a most important mentor to the man who is arguably the most popular wrestler in the entire NWA.

Also in this issue you'll find our "Official Wrestling Ratings" (page 14), a page of "Ratings Analysis" (page 18), two pages of your letters in "The Last Word" (page 68), and "Ringside Update:" (page 70), which keeps you abreast of the latest big developments in wrestling.

And, of course, there are four spectacular full-color pinups in the center of this magazine, all suitable for framing. These magnificent portraits of Hulk Hogan, The Road Warriors, Kerry Von Erich, and "Dr. D" David Shultz will look marvelous on your walls—well, maybe not Shultz!

We hope you enjoy this edition of *PWI Annual*, and we hope to see you again in three months when we present our Spring 1986 edition—Happy New Year! □

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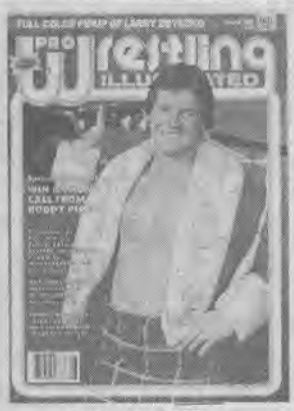


AUGUST 1983

July 1980/COLOR STARSHOT: The Sheik. Cover story: Bruno Sammartino. PLUS: Wrestling II, Race, Ladd, Albano.

August 1980/COLOR STARSHOT: Koloff and Smirnoff. Cover story: Bruno vs. Zbyszko. PLUS: Idol, Von Erichs, Rhodes, Hogan.

May 1982/COLOR POSTER: Ric Flair. Cover story: Wrestling II vs. Spoiler. PLUS: Backlund, McDaniel, Piper.

June 1982/COLOR POSTER: Nick Bockwinkel. Cover story: Adonis & Ventura. PLUS: Snuka, Patera, Flair.

August 1982/COLOR POSTER: Dino Bravo. Cover story: Steamboat & Rich. PLUS: Andre, Martel, Piper, Blassie.

September 1982/COLOR POSTER: Blackjack Mulligan Jr. Cover story: Tommy Rich. PLUS: Piper, Snuka, Von Erich, Martel, AWA Sheiks.

October 1982/COLOR POSTER: Jerry Lawler. Cover story: Ric Flair. PLUS: Rhodes, Graham, Race, Funk Jr.

December 1982/COLOR POSTER: Rick Martel. Cover story: Hulk Hogan. PLUS: Von Erich, Orndorff, Albano.

January 1983/COLOR POSTER: Ken Patera. Cover story: Rick Steamboat. PLUS: Rich, Brody, Sullivan, Backlund.

February 1983/COLOR POSTER: Ivan Putski. Cover story: Rhodes vs. Garvin. PLUS: Snuka, Super Destroyer, Bockwinkel, Funk.

April 1983/COLOR POSTER: Superstar Graham. Cover story: Mil Mascaras. PLUS: Valentine, Orndorff, Hart.

June 1983/COLOR POSTER: Cowboy Bob Orton. Cover story: Rick Martel. PLUS: Von Erich, Slaughter, Muraco.

July 1983/COLOR POSTER: Ivan Koloff. Cover story: Tommy Rich. PLUS: Patera, Von Erich, Snuka, Geigel.

August 1983/COLOR POSTER: Larry Zbyszko. Cover story: Roddy Piper. PLUS: Sullivan, Zbyszko, Von Erich, Wrestling II.

October 1983/COLOR POSTER: Junkyard Dog. Cover story: Tommy Rich. PLUS: Johnson, Adonis, Rhodes, Piper.

November 1983/COLOR POSTER: Roddy Piper. Cover story: Harley Race. PLUS: Santana, Mascaras, Ellering, Valiant, Race.

December 1983/COLOR POSTER: Wahoo McDaniel. Cover story: Dusty Rhodes. PLUS: Hayes, Steamboat, Hansen, DiBiase.

January 1984/COLOR POSTER: Harley Race. Cover story: Rick Martel. PLUS: Snuka, Freebirds, Dillon, Sawyer.

February 1984/COLOR POSTER: Jim Garvin & Sunshine. Cover story: Greg Valentine. PLUS: Super Destroyer, Race, Sawyer, Abdullah.

April 1984/COLOR POSTER: Rocky Johnson. Cover story: Ric Flair. PLUS: Hogan, Andre, Rich, Bundy.

May 1984/COLOR POSTER: Hacksaw Butch Reed. Cover story: Hulk Hogan. PLUS: Road Warriors, Fabulous Ones, Flair, Rotundo.

June 1984/COLOR POSTER: Dick Slater. Cover story: Ted DiBiase. PLUS: Wrestling II, Magnum T.A., Patera, One Man Gang, Hogan.

July 1984/COLOR POSTER: Paul Ellering. Cover story: Jimmy Valiant. PLUS: JYD, Fabulous Ones, Gagne, Windham.

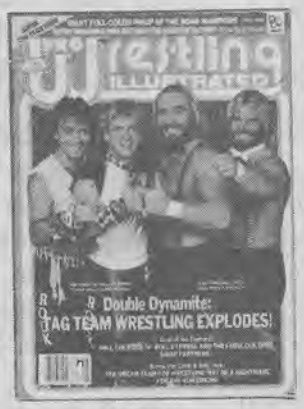
August 1984/COLOR POSTER: Stan Hansen. Cover story: Jerry Lawler. PLUS: Sullivan, Slaughter, Blackwell & Patera, Flair.

September 1984/COLOR POSTER: Hulk Hogan. Cover story: The Road Warriors. SPECIAL FIFTH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE—A Look Back At Wrestling In The *PWI* Years.

October 1984/COLOR POSTER: Billy Jack. Cover story: Kerry Von Erich. PLUS: Martel, Blanchard, Fabulous Blonds, Armstrong.

November 1984/COLOR POSTER: Rick Martel. Cover story: Sgt. Slaughter. PLUS: Von Erich, Road Warriors, Windham, Rotundo.

December 1984/COLOR POSTER: Kerry Von Erich. Cover story: Barry Windham. PLUS: Rich, Martel, McDaniel, WWF-NWA TV war.



MAY 1985

January 1985/COLOR POSTER: Tito Santana. Cover story: Road Warriors. PLUS: Billy Jack, Hayes, 1984 fan ballot.

February 1985/COLOR POSTER: Magnum T.A. Cover story: Rick Martel. PLUS: Hogan, Backlund, Ellering.

March 1985/SPECIAL YEAR-END AWARDS ISSUE! FOUR PAGE COLOR SECTION: Billy Jack, Roddy Piper, Ric Flair vs. Kerry Von Erich; PLUS: 1984—The Year In Review.

April 1985/COLOR POSTER: Ronnie Garvin. Cover story: Jimmy Snuka. PLUS: Warriors, Gordy, Flair, Rhodes.

May 1985/COLOR POSTER: Road Warriors. SPECIAL TAG TEAM ISSUE! Cover story: Fabulous Ones & Rock 'n' Roll Express. PLUS: Windham & Rotundo, Von Erich & Billy Haynes, *PWI* Rates Top 15 teams.

June 1985/COLOR POSTER: Barry Windham. Cover story: Dusty Rhodes. PLUS: Slaughter, Hogan, Von Erich, Magnum T.A.

July 1985/COLOR POSTER: Sgt. Slaughter. Cover story: Hogan vs. Piper. PLUS: Road Warriors, One Man Gang, Magnum T.A., Martel.

JUNE 1985

August 1985/COLOR POSTER: Rock 'n' Roll Express. Cover story: Von Erichs. PLUS: Slaughter, Hogan, NWA scouting reports.

September 1985/COLOR POSTER: Junkyard Dog. Cover story: Magnum T.A. PLUS: Von Erich, Hogan, AWA scouting reports.

October 1985/COLOR POSTER: Chris Adams. Cover story: Steamboat. PLUS: Warriors, Nikita, WWF scouting reports.

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RICK MARTEL

(Continued from page 23)

tell someone. Do you realize what this could mean to professional wrestling? A match like this could change the entire face of this sport forever."

That's *if* it comes off, I thought to myself. "Wasn't becoming AWA World champion enough?" I asked.

"Sure, I'm very proud of my accomplishment, and I'm proud of the organization I represent," Martel responded. "But, to be honest, I'm only champion of half the world. Flair's got the rest of it, and I want that half, too.

"I sound like a spoiled child, don't I," Martel said sheepishly. "I'm not one of those guys who walks around saying, 'I want everything yesterday.' You know that. It's just that I want to do something that no one has ever done before. If I can pull this off, I'll be known as the man who reunited the world's heavyweight wrestling championship."

Martel is so excited about the prospects of signing a match with Flair that he's already begun studying the NWA champion's style, watching tapes of his matches, and looking for sparring partners who he thinks can duplicate Flair's style in training sessions. The AWA champion is quick to explain, however, that this extracurricular activity is not hindering his performance in title defenses.

"I would never let this take away from defending my title," he said. "Uniting the titles is a dream. The AWA World championship is a reality. I can't let it go. Besides, if I do, my dream dies as well.

"I've been watching two of Flair's matches in particular," Martel continued. "His loss to Harley Race in June 1983 and his loss to Kerry Von Erich this past May. I wanted to see if there was anything in particular that they did that made the difference in those matches. There wasn't. Nothing special.

"If you remember the Race match, in that third fall it was just a case of Flair being too tired to bridge up. He had Race pinned, but his shoulders were down, too.

Martel has studied the match in which Flair lost his title to Kerry Von Erich (below). Rick was at his best during his title-winning effort against Jumbo Tsuruta in May (opposite page). Against Flair, he'd have to be even better.

Race lifted his shoulder and Flair lost the belt. And when Flair lost the belt to Kerry, he was pinned with a backslide. You just can't kick out of every pinning combination."

Martel said that defeating Ric Flair would take "a good half-hour

to an hour of the best wrestling of my career.

"This could be the most exciting event that professional wrestling has ever seen," Martel said. "All Ric Flair has to do is sign on the dotted line and it's all set."

Martel seemed to be oversimplifying the matter. Absent from the contract were provisions for date, location, and most important, the size of the purses.

"That will be taken care of by the promoter," Martel said. "There will have to be a mutually accepted money arrangement. We're talking big, big money. Both of us are taking the biggest risks of our careers. You see, until we wrestle, both of us have a claim to a world championship. After the match, one of us will lose that claim, plus all the money and prestige that goes along with it."

To the winner, though, goes a dinstinction that has not existed for almost 30 years. Martel feels it's worth the risk. Flair could not be reached for comment. Perhaps he was in the gym, working on a title reunification strategy of his own. □

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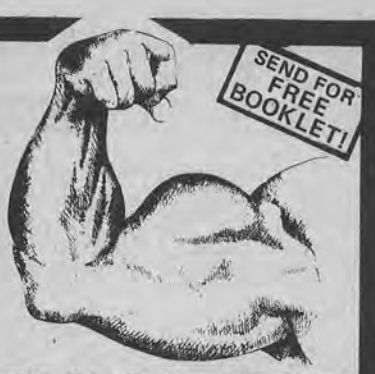

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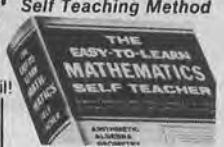

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MR. WRESTLING II

(Continued from page 49)

Magnum T.A. cannot understand why Wrestling II is down on Lanny Poffo. Lanny, headlocking Larry Higgins (above) and executing a backflip pin against Dennis Condrey (opposite right), has chosen a separate path from his brother and father.

continued on as teacher and student, and remained friends and tag team partners.

Their work complete, Apter and Wrestling II filed past my door. Quickly, I threw my notes in my briefcase, picked up an extra set of batteries for my tape recorder, grabbed my coat, and headed for Apter's office.

As I approached the door to his office, I heard II's deep, gravelly voice. "What is this garbage!" he yelled. Wrestling II had a pile of photos in his hands. He flipped through them with a fury, throwing them onto Apter's desk when he was finished.

"Why wasn't I made aware of this. Why didn't I know this?" he asked. "This is incredible. I can't believe this. What the hell is going on here?"

I walked over to the desk, making sure not to get in II's way. I picked up one of the photos. It was a ring pose of Magnum T.A. standing next to Randy Savage, Lanny Poffo's older brother. I understood Wrestling II's rage. I also realized that this was a more important story than the one I had planned. I turned my tape recorder on and inconspicuously put it down on the desk.

"Look at this," he said, picking the photos off Apter's desk to take a second look. "First it was Lanny Poffo, and now he's teaming with Randy Savage, Poffo's brother. They're probably being advised by the old man, Angelo Poffo. This isn't good." He shook his head in disgust. "Not good at all."

Wrestling II pulled out the pose of T.A. and Savage and threw the rest of the prints down again. The two wrestlers were pictured standing in the ring, their hands on their hips. Allen was smiling as he looked across the ring. He looked comfortable being in the ring with Savage, as if it was not the first time they had been together.

The photos had been taken on Thanksgiving night in Atlanta, Georgia. Savage and Allen were entered in the annual tag team tournament, and had placed second behind the winners, Hacksaw Butch Reed and Pistol Pez Whatley.

"Single wrestlers were teamed up by the promoters," Apter explained. "They were teamed up by chance. They pulled names out of a hat."

"Come on, Bill," II said. "If you're gonna give me excuses, at least give me good excuses. How did they get to the finals if this was a chance teaming. They had to have worked together beforehand. I just don't believe this. What do you know about this, Apter? You know everything that's going on.

C'mon, Bill."

"Nothing, II," Apter replied. "Really, I don't know anything about this. No more than you do, anyway."

"This is definitely a sign," II said. "This is getting way out of hand now. The Poffos are gonna ruin that boy. They're dangerous. Terry's still developing. All he needs is some idiot like Angelo Poffo filling his head with ideas. He'll be teaching him how to hide foreign objects, how to hide a choke from a referee. Terry doesn't need the illegal tactics. He has real talent. We've come so far in the time we've worked together. I have to stop this now, whether Terry likes it or not. I'm sorry."

II stormed out of the office. He had forgotten that we had an appointment, but I had gotten my story.

As I was about to turn off my recorder, II came back into Bill's office. "I need these photos, Bill," he said, grabbing them off his desk. "Just send me a bill for them."

He turned to leave again, but before he did, he looked my way and said, "You can turn off your tape machine now, Bua. You've got your story." □

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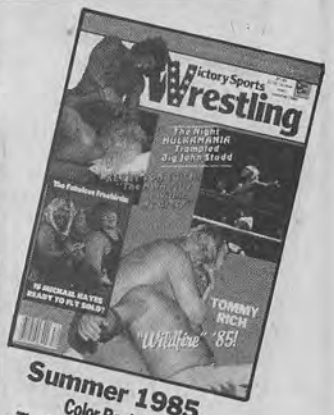

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PRESS CONFERENCE

(Continued from page 12)

Ric Flair, the NWA champion, whom you have wrestled. Your opinion of him as a champion.

BACKLUND: **You know, he's a good wrestler, he stays in good shape, he's really colorful, but he does some things that I really don't appreciate in the ring. But you've gotta respect the guy, he keeps coming back, he works hard, and he's a hard guy to beat.**

APTER: How about Rick Martel, the AWA champion?

BACKLUND: **Rick Martel has got a lot of spirit, a lot of energy, and a lot of drive. He hasn't had the title that long, but I think he's gonna be a wonderful champion, and be a good representative for our profession. I enjoy watching him wrestle. You know, that's wrestling. Wrestling isn't pulling hair and pulling trunks, it's trying to compete with somebody, trying to take him off his feet, trying to get him on his back, trying to make him submit. That's what wrestling is all about.**

APTER: And finally, of course, Hulk Hogan.

BACKLUND: **Well, now, there's a controversy there whether you're saying he has the title or whether you say he has the belt. I feel like I still have the title, because I didn't submit and I didn't give up. He has the belt right now.**

APTER: Let's discuss him as a wrestler then.

BACKLUND: **He's a professional wrestler, and I've gotta respect everybody in professional wrestling, because it takes a lot of hard work and determination, and the people really like him. I technically look at his matches and I guess the people could do the same thing, and you don't see him do too many wrestling maneuvers. That's what I look at to see if somebody is a great scientific wrestler. But I can't put him down, he's successful in what he does.**

APTER: Let's discuss, now, the future for Bob Backlund. First of all, how did you get involved with the new

(Continued on page 60)

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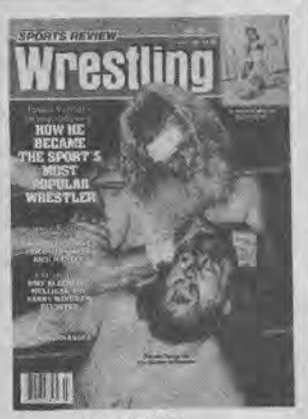

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March 1978/Cover stories: Andre-Flair, Mascaras. PLUS: Koloff, Rhodes, Inoki.

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April 1980/Cover stories: Andre, Mulligan-Studd. PLUS: LeDuc, Lawler, Ladd.

May 1980/Cover stories: Koloff-Anderson, Brody-Spoiler. PLUS: Graham, Andre.

June 1980/Cover stories: Graham, Patera. PLUS: Rhodes, Lawler, Zbyszko.

July 1980/Cover story: Bruno-Graham. PLUS: Samoans, Star Wars 1980.

October 1980/Cover story: Hogan. PLUS: Flair, Wrestling II, Super D.

January 1981/Cover story: Morales-Fuji. PLUS: Zbyszko, Thornton, Keirn.

March 1981/Cover story: SPECIAL EDITION—Results of 1980 Fan Poll

April 1981/Cover story: Atlas. PLUS: Flair, Moondogs, Wrestling II.

June 1981/Cover stories: Morales-Khan. PLUS: Lawler, Slater, Piper.

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September 1981/Cover story: Backlund-Mosca. PLUS: Freebirds, Flair, Rich, Junkyard Dog.

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December 1981/Cover story: Muraco-Morales. PLUS: Patera, Steele, Andre.

March 1982/Cover stories: Valentine, Brisco-Funk. PLUS: Steele, Flair, Hayes.

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May 1982/Cover story: Rich-Flair. PLUS: Backlund, Superstar, Dillon, Wrestling II.

June 1982/Cover stories: Tommy Rich, Jimmy Snuka. PLUS: Wrestlers rate each other.

July 1982/Cover stories: Steamboat-Idol, Albano. PLUS: Rhodes, Patera.

August 1982/Cover stories: Piper-Rich, Flair-Slater. PLUS: Rhodes, Valentine, Bockwinkel.

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November 1982/Cover story: Piper. PLUS: Abdullah, Saito, Von Erich.

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June 1983/Cover stories: Piper, Bockwinkel-Patterson. PLUS: Brody, Sullivan.

NOVEMBER 1983

July 1983/Cover story: Valiant-Humperdink. PLUS: Martel, Hernandez, Murdoch, Armstrong.

October 1983/Cover stories: Martel-Valentine, Mulligan. PLUS: Lawler, Von Erichs, Bruno.

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PRESS CONFERENCE

(Continued from page 58)

Backlund and Jimmy Snuka engaged in a classic series at Madison Square Garden in 1982. When Snuka became a fan favorite, he never got another title match.

Pro Wrestling USA television program?

BACKLUND: **They approached me and asked me if I wanted to come and wrestle for them, and I told them no at first.**

APTER: What were you doing at this point?

BACKLUND: **I had gotten a job. I figured I wasn't going to wrestle anymore, I was working some in construction, I was gonna get a job in coaching, maybe at the college or high school level, in wrestling. I wasn't going to lower my standards or lower my morals or do things that I wasn't proud of. I want my friends out there and I want my wife and my daughter to be proud to say that they're a friend of Bob Backlund's, not to be ashamed of it. And these *[Pro Wrestling USA]* people talked to me, and they convinced me that I wouldn't have to change my ways if I came and wrestled for them. And and I said, 'I'll come and I'll do my best for you.'**

APTER: What are your immediate plans?

BACKLUND: **I'm gonna be making some trips overseas, and I'm gonna be continuing doing the stuff with the kids, and I'm gonna be wrestling with *Pro Wrestling USA*.**

APTER: Are you looking for a shot at the NWA and AWA titles, which are both involved in this program?

BACKLUND: **Well, the way *Pro Wrestling USA* sees it, they have three champions. They have the NWA champion, who is Ric Flair, they have the AWA champion, who is Rick Martel, and they have myself. I don't have the belt. But they feel they have a champion in me. We're all in the same organization, and I'm probably going to be meeting up with one of the two somewhere down the line.**

APTER: Will you be actually saying that it's a defense of the WWF title when you wrestle?

BACKLUND: **If a guy puts me down one, two, three, or makes me submit, then I've finally lost, and then I'm not going to say anymore that I'm the titleholder.**

APTER: Before we wrap up, is there one thing that you would like to say to the fans, to the readers of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated?*

BACKLUND: **You know, there's a lot of people all over the United States who have my box number, and there's**

(Continued on page 62)

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PRESS CONFERENCE

(Continued from page 60)

Backlund scores a takedown against Rick Martel during their classic AWA title showdown in Minneapolis.

a lot of people who have been writing to me. That's Box 973, Glastonbury, Connecticut 06033. People write in and they say, "To us you're still the champion, in our hearts you're still the champion." That gave me a lot of drive. The WWF, I think, was trying to convince me that the people weren't supportive of me, that the people didn't care about me. And I felt they did. But I had no way of really knowing it. You know yourself that I haven't been on television in the WWF for about six months. And I feel that they wanted the people to slowly forget about me, possibly. And there was no way for me to communicate with the people. Except now, thank God, for *Pro Wrestling USA*. I can get out to the people, and I want to know whether they're behind me or not. And if they aren't, then I'll probably have to get out of wrestling. Then I will know whether the people are gonna want to support somebody that's just Bob Backlund or do they want to support somebody that has green hair. I'm gonna be myself, and I want to know if the people will support somebody that's just gonna be himself. □

BLANCHARD-RHODES

(Continued from page 25)

going to please Dusty that a Blanchard would try to degrade the image of West Texas State football in any way. Already the two are on opposite sides of the Mid-Atlantic "superfeud," and this absurd charge is not going to help any.

"Dusty is a walking testament to low IQ," Blanchard said. "And he doesn't care at all about showing it. Look at what he's done so far. He's stuck his nose in where it doesn't belong already, and if he doesn't take it out soon, he's gonna lose it."

Upon signing for a series of matches in the Mid-Atlantic region, Rhodes became the fifth component of the feud that already involves Blanchard, Wahoo McDaniel, Ric Flair, and Rick Steamboat. "I don't like what I see here," Dusty said. "My friend Wahoo McDaniel is a changed man. He's being influenced by the lies of others. He's being used, especially by that obnoxious little Tully Blanchard, the only blemish on the West Texas State alumni roll.

"The only reason Tully Blanchard graduated is because scum rises to the top. He's a lowdown thievin' weasel, a sleazeball, an embarrassment to the maroon and white of the West Texas State Buffaloes. And as far as his little stories go, I won't even credit him with a response. After all, daddy, The Dream is a first-class guy."

Blanchard doesn't think so, though. In fact, he was so sure that he would beat Rhodes that he put his NWA television title and a $10,000 added purse on the line. Ultimately, both men were counted out of the ring and disqualified, but both also claimed a moral victory.

Blanchard, whose money and TV title were on the line for only the first 10 minutes, used the clock up by rolling in and out of the ring. Dusty caught his opponent for only a few seconds at a time, inflicting enough punishment to remind the TV champ that he'd better leave the ring again soon. Once the TV time limit was up, however, Blanchard got sloppy, and Rhodes took the opportunity to pound his opponent.

"Did you see what he did?" Blanchard asked. "Did you see what that idiot, that stupid fat idiot did? I can't even imagine how his brain works. How does he think he's gonna win a match when he uses the figure-four leglock outside the ring? How do you win a

Having thrown Rhodes out of the ring, Blanchard follows up with a vicious series of kicks. Dusty is now very much involved in the Mid-Atlantic superfeud.

match like that? The referee isn't gonna call for a submission when the guys are outside the ring! He's counting us out, and the slob is clamping down on the figure-four!

"You know what I said to myself? I said fine, I don't care. I still have my NWA TV title, and I still have my 10 grand. On top of that, Dusty made another public display of his stupidity, which at least amused the crowd. You can understand that I want the crowd to have as good a time as possible, and watching Dusty has to give them a good laugh.

"Tubbo better watch out,

though," Blanchard said, "because I'm just getting a little tired of this game. He doesn't belong. He has no reason to be involved in this situation. I don't know why he decided he had to step in and save Wahoo McDaniel. Wahoo told me that Dusty never did squat for him. Nothing. Zero. Zilch. Now, all of a sudden, Rhodes is here to save Wahoo from me. Well, I'll tell you the real story. Wahoo is a threat to them now. For the first time, Wahoo is his own man and they better watch out, 'cause they're gonna feel the wrath of Wahoo McDaniel."

Rhodes had a completely different view. "I had to chase that little twerp all over the ring," he explained. "I had to drag him back into the ring just so I would have something to do. He'd roll in to stop the referee's count, and then he'd roll right back out. How are you supposed to wrestle with the phantom coming in and out like a yo-yo?

"So I went after him. I come to fight, not to run. If he wants to run, he should get rid of those boots and get some track shoes. He got me mad, and when The Dream gets mad, he wants to hit. The little brat couldn't run away from me forever, so when I caught him, I slapped on that figure-four. I knew I wouldn't get the win, but I thought the figure-four might slow him down the next time. And it made me feel real good to see Tully scream and wince as I cinched down on his legs.

"He weaseled himself around the ring to keep his dirty money and his title," Dusty said, "so I had nothin' to lose. A victory is always great, but I accomplished something more. I let this snobby little jerk know that The Dream lives on, and it's a dream that even his sleazing around can't kill. Long live The Dream." □

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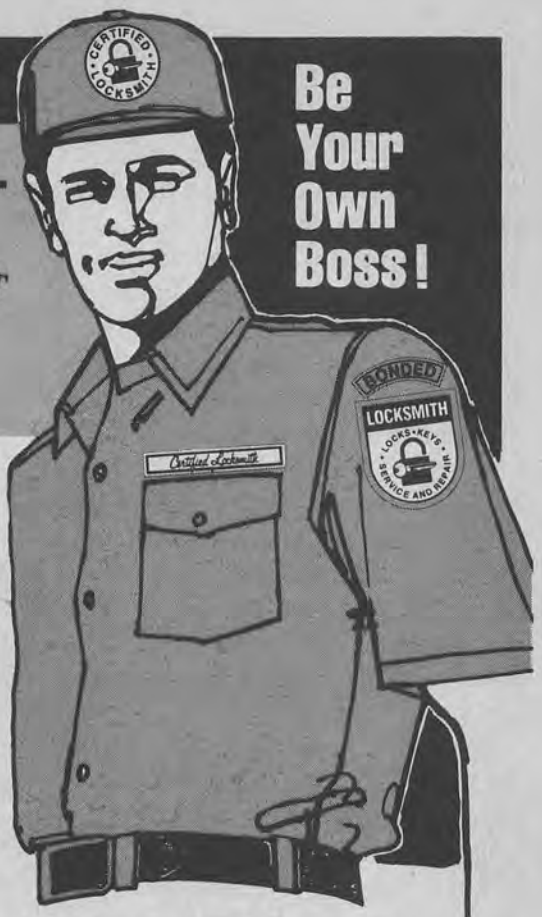

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RINGSIDE UPDATE

(Continued from page 70)

Iceman Parsons pinned "Gentleman" Chris Adams to win the World Class American heavyweight title on July 5, and Killer Brooks, Mark Lewin, and One Man Gang won the World Class six-man tag team title from Kevin, Kerry, and Mike Von Erich on July 7.

"I am so happy," Parsons said during a postmatch interview. "This is the first major title I've held in a long time, brother, and

Iceman Parsons has been doing a lot of dancing since winning the World Class American title from Chris Adams.

it's gonna be boogie-down time here in the World Class area. The fans are behind me all the way, and this title is for them. As the song says, brother, we are family! Yes indeed!"

Parsons' victory, which occurred in Dallas, ended a reign for Adams that began when he defeated Kerry Von Erich on February 8, 1985, also in Dallas.

Manager Gary Hart gloated after his team's victory over the Von Erichs. "Now let's see what those Von Erich children have to say. Everyone talks about Texas, they talk about the Von Erichs, they say they're the greatest six-man team in the world. Not anymore they're not. As of now, they're only so much pure trash!"

The Von Erichs had held the title since December 31, 1984, when they won the championship from Chris Adams, Gino Hernandez, and Jake Roberts. □

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FEED THE WORLD

With so much worldwide attention being focused on the famine in Ethiopia, it makes me sick every time I see a picture of Kamala, and your color pinup in the Summer 1985 issue of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated Annual* really made me gag. Look at the flesh hanging off of his frame. It's as if someone dipped the Pillsbury Dough Boy into a vat of chocolate. Doesn't he have any feelings toward his starving African brothers? Can he be so insensitive to their plight?

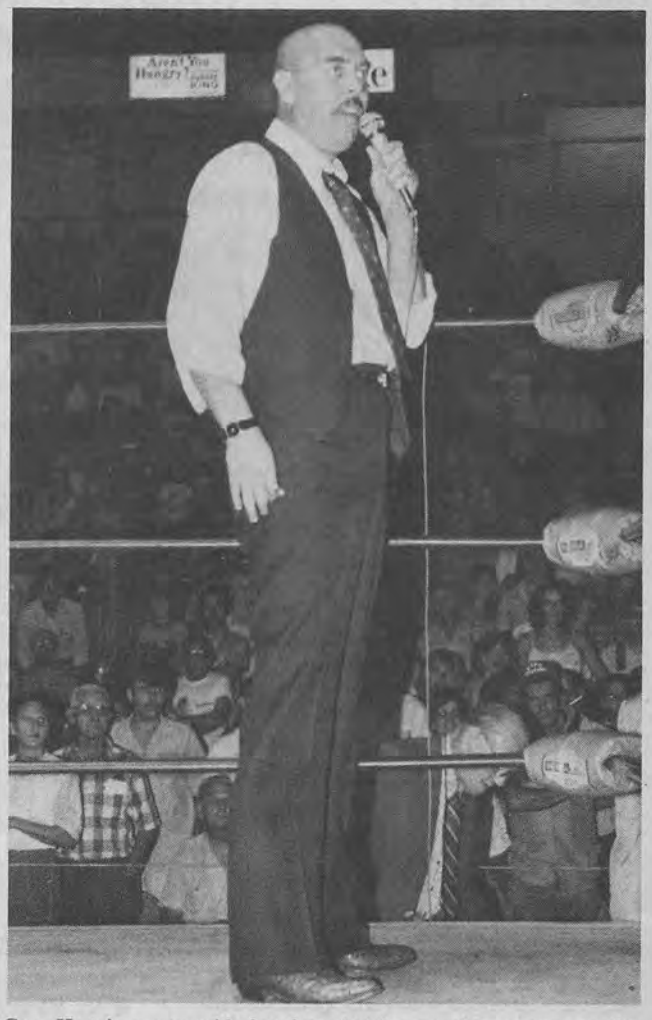
I've heard that Kamala can consume an entire side of beef in a single sitting. This to me condemns the man more than his past employment as a death camp guard in Uganda. What a pig! What a callous, vicious, corpulent slob! I wish someone, maybe Sgt. Slaughter, would chop Kamala up into hamburger meat. At pounds, he would make 1,468 quarter-pound patties (before cooking), and that would certainly keep at least a couple of hungry little stomachs full for several weeks. While Kamala might not qualify as gourmet cuisine, at least he'd be more useful on the barbeque then in the ring.

Giant Kamala is a 468-pound disgrace, writes Sandy Stafford. Sandy feels the problem of world hunger could be solved if Kamala could be chopped up and distributed to the needy!

SANDY STAFFORD
Rye, NY

HART OF THE MATTER

He's sneaky. He's ugly. He would lie, cheat, and swindle his own mother if he thought a buck could be made but, it doesn't matter to me, because I think Gary Hart is the coolest and hippest guy in wrestling today. First of all, the guy is a natural born comedian. When he grabs the microphone and goes into his monologue, I laugh so hard I almost make in my pants. I think the entire wrestlling world underestimates the technical and managerial skills of Mr. Hart. He is capable of taking any wrestler and turning him into a champion. Hart is a man who combires great personality with a strong commitment to his profession. I am proud to be his fan.



Gary Hart is a man with few fans, but he can always count on the support of Walter Lockman, who writes, "Hart is a man who combines great personality with a strong commitment to his profession."

WALTER LOCKMAN
Ft. Worth, TX

APPLAUSE FOR US

Pro Wrestling Illustrated Annual is the perfect compliment to anyone's wrestling collection. It allows the fan to sit back and marvel at how unpredictable the world of wrestling is. In the Summer '85 issue, the story on Dusty Rhodes: "Has Dusty Rhodes Turned His Back On The American Dream?," filled me with embarrassed laughter. I remember when that story ran in *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* back in 1983. My reaction was one of absolute astonishment.

After the way Dusty Rhodes took care of business last year, reader Rusty Murphy will never doubt "The American Dream" again.

I'm a big Dusty Rhodes fan (although I'm not quite as big as Dusty) and I couldn't believe that he could turn on his ideals and on his fans all for the fleeting taste of personal glory.

Of course now, two years later, after Dusty's "Takin' Care of Business" tour, I could kick myself for having such little faith. I'll certainly never sell Dusty short again. It just goes to show how terrific a magazine *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* is if I look forward to re-reading the stories again in *PWI Annual*. Keep up the smashing work.

RUSTY MURPHY
Lindenhurst, NY

GOOD GUYS DON'T

I'd like to comment on Bruce Jackson's letter in Summer's *PWI Annual* about the possibilities of Jimmy Snuka getting a shot at Hulk Hogan's title. Forget about it, Brucie. There is no way that the WWF will promote a title match between Hogan and

As a rulebreaker, Jimmy Snuka received a title shot with WWF champion Bob Backlund back in 1982. "Last Word" contributor Pat Stingone doesn't expect to see him in the ring with Hulk Hogan.

Snuka. The only way for that match to take place would be for one of those two men to resume their evil and illegal styles. Fan favorites mix about as well as oil and vinegar in the WWF. Watch for Hogan to wrestle the same, boring kind of rulebreaker as long as he is able to wrestle. Then, after Hogan is through beating up on them, he will probably fall into a massive feud with Snuka. You can always count on the WWF to provide the fans with the most boring combinations of matches possible.

PAT STINGONE
Seattle, WA

A SUGGESTION

A suggestion: Why don't you guys do a "Ratings Analysis" of each federation over the last 20 years? That way you could pick out trends, analyze what were the dominating forces in certain years, and then maybe predict the path that wrestling will take in the future. I love when your magazines run special features, and I think this one would provide interesting research for your staff and interesting copy for us readers.

PAM KALKBERN
Miami □

RINGSIDE Update

With Bill Apter

UPDATE: SHELBY, NORTH CAROLINA

The tag team of Rick Morton and Robert Gibson, better known as The Rock 'n' Roll Express, are the new NWA World tag team champions.

Morton and Gibson won the championship belts on July 7 in Shelby, North Carolina, defeating the team of Ivan Koloff and Krusher Khrushchev. (Though it was Ivan and Nikita Koloff who originally won the belts from Dusty Rhodes and Manny Fernandez, any two of the three men in the Russian team were permitted to defend the title).

The Rock 'n' Roll Express—Robert Gibson and Rick Morton—have captured the NWA World tag team belts from Ivan Koloff and Krusher Khrushchev.

Morton scored the pinfall over Ivan Koloff when he hit the Russian with a dive from the top rope and held his shoulders to the mat for a three-count.

"This is the greatest day in our careers!" exclaimed a jubilant Rick Morton. "Everyone had been saying how the Russians had a lock on the belts, and how they were maybe even better than The Road Warriors! Well, we proved that we're better than the Russians! So now bring on the Warriors, bring on The Midnight Express, bring on anyone you want! We're ready, brother!"

Some observers of the NWA wrestling scene have speculated that the Russian team was weakened by the fact that in recent months they concentrated too heavily on Nikita's July 6 match with NWA World champion Ric Flair, and not enough on refining the tag team style of Ivan Koloff and Krusher Khrushchev.

UPDATE: BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

Tito Santana is once again the WWF Intercontinental champion. Tito regained the title by defeating Greg "The Hammer" Valentine on July 6 in a steel cage match in the Baltimore Civic Center.

The victory marks the beginning of Santana's second reign as Intercontinental champ; Tito's first title reign came to an end after more than seven months when Valentine captured the title on September 24, 1984, in London, Ontario.

After several failed attempts, Tito Santana was able to recapture the WWF Intercontinental title from Greg Valentine.

Santana becomes the third man in the six-year existence of the Intercontinental title to wear the belt on two occasions; Pedro Morales and Magnificent Muraco are also two-time titlists.

Santana's victory sparked a flurry of speculation in the WWF. Critics and followers of WWF developments are already asking how Valentine's loss of the title will affect his relationship with his manager, Jimmy Hart.

In the wings for a title shot: Magnificent Muraco, who no doubt feels pangs of jealousy at being one of three two-time Intercontinental titlists. It is likely that the Hawaiian star will begin a campaign against Santana to be the only three-time Intercontinental champ.

Also of note is the fact that several WWF insiders have expressed concern about the condition of Santana's right leg, which underwent arthroscopic surgery about six months ago. With Santana now facing a rigorous schedule of title defenses, one has to wonder how Santana's knee problems will affect his current title reign.

UPDATE: DALLAS, TEXAS

Two major title changes have taken place in the World Class area.

(Continued on page 65)

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. . . a skinny, scrawny body is no asset in social or business life. Give the GAIN Plan a chance to help build you up and put firm flesh on you.

THINK OF WHAT THIS CAN MEAN TO YOU

If you are one of those unfortunate people who can't wear all the new high style clothes you want to wear . . . if you are ashamed of the way you look in a bathing suit . . . embarrassed because your legs are too thin and spindly . . . your chest is too flat . . . your arms aren't the full, rounded limbs they were meant to be . . . If you long for a more attractive-looking body, the safe, pleasant GAIN Plan can be the answer to your prayers!

Yes, now, with the GAIN Plan to help, it's so easy, so pleasant to add pounds and inches of firm, attractive flesh . . . so fulfilling to feel better, stronger, more vital and alive! But don't take our word for it. Prove it to yourself at our risk!

If you sincerely want to gain weight, and to look better and feel better as a result,

HERE IS OUR OFFER . . .

We honestly believe the GAIN Plan to be the finest and most effective product of its type sold anywhere in the world today, and to prove our confidence, we are backing that statement up with this honest, straightforward offer . . .

Try the fabulous new GAIN Plan in your own home at our risk. Subject it to any test you like. Weigh yourself before you start. Weigh yourself later. If you haven't started to see substantial weight gain within 7 days, and if you don't feel better and look better as a result, or, if you are not completely satisfied for any reason, PAY NOTHING! It's just as simple as that.

If you are in doubt . . . even if you think nothing can possibly help you, for the sake of your appearance, and your happiness, at least try it! If the GAIN Plan works the way we know it will, you'll agree it is worth the few dollars it cost.

On the other hand, if it doesn't work the way you expected, it costs you nothing, and a least you have had the satisfaction of trying it at our expense.

What could be fairer than that? The next move is up to you. Once and for all, determine to do something about your underweight! We know you'll be happy you did.

GAIN IS SAFE

GAIN is not a dangerous drug, medicine or a fishy-tasting oil. It is made of safe, pure ingredients, contains nothing which could possibly harm you, and may even be taken with complete safety by children.

MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE

Send for the GAIN Plan today. Try if for 7 days entirely at our risk. If, at the end of 7 days, you haven't started to gain pounds and inches and to look better and to feel better . . . If you aren't convinced the GAIN Plan is a safe, pleasant, way to gain weight, don't keep it! Return the empty bottle and get your money back immediately, no questions asked!

VITAL NOTE

A current issue of a famous medical journal reports on a recent government controlled study. This study, conducted over a 24 year period on 5,000 underweight and overweight men and women, proves that being underweight is as injurious to health and longevity as being overweight.

MAIL NO-RISK COUPON TODAY

GAIN PRODUCTS, Dept. G8
535 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10017

Please send my package of GAIN Plan immediately with the understanding that if I am not satisfied, I may have my money back, no questions asked.

- ☐ One GAIN PLAN for $9.98
- ☐ SAVE $2.00! Order 2 for $17.96
- ☐ SAVE $5.00! Order 3 for $25.00

Enclosed is $_____

☐ cash, ☐ check or ☐ money order

NAME _____ please print

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

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SHOW THE WORLD YOU'RE A TRUE WRESTLING FAN!

PWI T-SHIRT

PWI CAP

PWI SKYFLYER

NOW AVAILABLE

A FULL LINE OF TOP-QUALITY MERCHANDISE FROM THE LARGEST-SELLING, MOST RESPECTED WRESTLING MAGAZINE IN THE WORLD

PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED

THE PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED T-SHIRT

A favorite among wrestling fans for years. These high-quality, silk-screened shirts are a fashion blend of 50% comfortable cotton and 50% long-wearing polyester. The official *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* T-shirt is crimson-red with white lettering and comes in a selection of four sizes: small, medium, large, and extra large. Only $7.00.

THE PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED CAP

The perfect companion to the *PWI* T-shirt. A bright crimson-red hat emblazoned with a white *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* logo in unique raised lettering for a spectacular three-dimensional look and feel. Be the first fan in your neighborhood to wear one! Top-quality, long-wearing—one size fits all. Only $7.00.

THE PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED "SKYFLYER"

Get ready for summer fun the whole year-round with the only flying disc to bear the official *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* name. A bright red disc with yellow and white lettering, the *PWI* "Skyflyer" is constructed of sturdy plastic for years of enjoyment. A full 9¼ inches in diameter. Only $5.00

THE PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED BUMPER STICKER

The *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* logo is reproduced in dynamic red on a bright yellow background. This giant sticker (3¾ inches by 15 inches) is specially made of high-quality vinyl for easy application and removal. A guaranteed eye-catcher wherever you place it! Only $2.00.

THE PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED BUTTON

Wear the *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* button proudly on your shirt, jacket, or hat to show the world you love pro wrestling. A sturdy button with safety pin backing, the official *PWI* button is oblong in shape and measures 1¾ inches by 2¾ inches. Dynamic red logo on bright yellow background. Only $1.00.

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ALL FIVE ITEMS! YOU'LL RECEIVE: ONE T-SHIRT, ONE HAT, ONE SKYFLYER, TWO BUMPER STICKERS, AND TWO BUTTONS! THAT'S A $25.00 VALUE FOR THE SPECIAL LOW PRICE OF ONLY $19.95 (save over $5.00!) THE PERFECT BIRTHDAY OR HOLIDAY GIFT FOR ANY WRESTLING FAN!

PWI BUMPER STICKER

PWI BUTTON

DELUXE PACKAGE

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PWI T-SHIRT (specify size: s,m,l,xl)	$7.00 ea.		
PWI CAP	$7.00 ea.		
PWI SKYFLYER	$5.00 ea.		
PWI BUMPER STICKER	$2.00 ea.		
PWI BUTTON	$1.00 ea.		
PWI DELUXE PACKAGE	$19.95 ea.		
		TOTAL AMOUNT	

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Make checks payable to **TV SPORTS, INC.**

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